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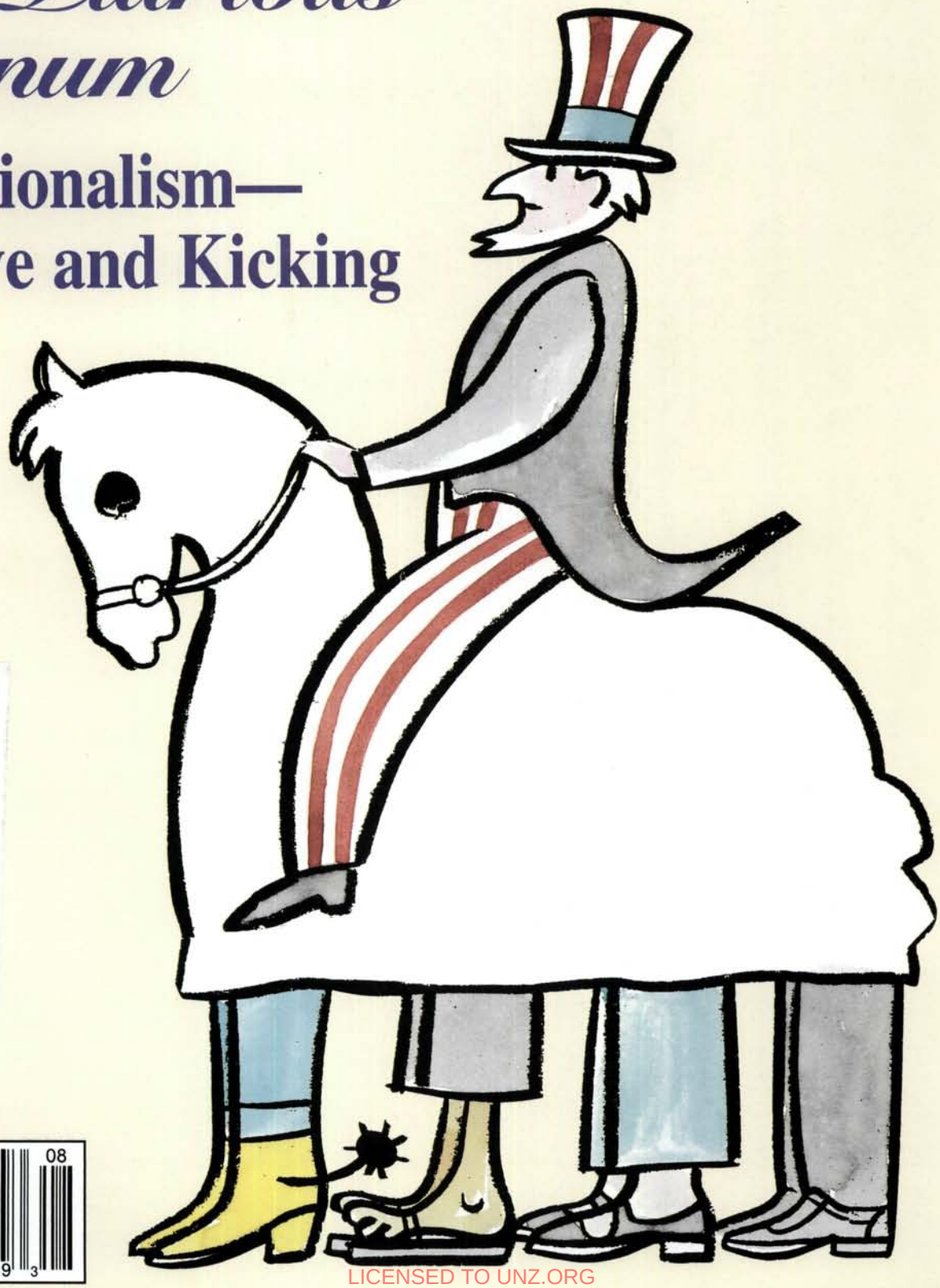

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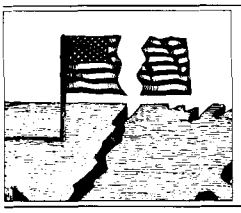

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On Social Security

In his May editorial, R. Cort Kirkwood felt compelled to speak for Ayn Rand and to castigate "entitlements" for "home-owning, white Republicans" with retirement income in excess of $50,000 per annum. Kirkwood is sorely confused.

Rand would indeed have been offended by the compulsory form of savings for retirement that Social Security imposes on "home-owning white Republicans" who would rather set aside and invest for their own retirement in ways not subject to federal "borrowing." But Kirkwood certainly does not know the same Rand that the rest of us know when he suggests that those of us who have more than paid for our benefits help comprise a "ponderous burden."

In fact, anyone with a retirement income of $50,000 per annum almost certainly has paid into the Social Security system far more than will ever be made available to such home-owning, white Republicans. It is this very class that has helped subsidize the far more numerous class of retirees that receives a "minimum" benefit that far, far exceeds any contribution made by them to the system. Kirkwood had better figure out just where the "ponderous burden" rests, and not do a doublethink in the name of Ayn Rand.

—Douglas Thornsjo
Kennebunkport, ME

Mr. Kirkwood Replies:

I do not understand Mr. Thornsjo's complaint, for he does not dispute my facts. Of course, retirees, whether they are rich white Republicans or poor black Democrats, are entitled to receive the money they "invested" in Social Security. The problem is, recipients often collect *more* than they contributed. Moreover, an increasing number of Americans never contributed *any* money to the Social Security system, yet thanks to Congress are eligible for benefits.

As for Social Security itself, anyone who ever believed the politicians and bureaucrats in Washington could be trusted to save money for retirees is either naive or stupid. I say scrap the program for everyone 45 years old and younger. Return their money and let them fend for themselves. Give people 46 years or older a choice: take your money now, with interest, or stick with the system. Let this group know that an individual will not receive a dime more than he put into the system.

Ideally, Social Security ought to be abolished immediately, but the government has gotten too many older folks accustomed to the idea that it will care for them in their dotage. In fact, that was part of the agreement with today's retirees when they paid their money into the system. The government has no right to breech it. However, Americans my age deserve the option of opting out. It is amusing, and perhaps telling, to note the town in which Mr. Thornsjo lives. It is Kennebunkport, Maine, home of white, George Bush Republicans who typically earn more than $50,000 per year, own their own homes, and in all probability receive a corporate pension and the Social Security payments he defends.

On John Maynard Keynes

In his May column, Samuel Francis describes a famous passage about "defunct economists" by John Maynard Keynes as "perhaps the only wise sentence that [he] ever wrote." May I suggest that in addition to that wise passage, there are others, among them the following from a paper on the politics of Edmund Burke which he wrote in 1904 while a young Cambridge undergraduate: "Our power of prediction is slight, our command over remote results infinitesimal. It is therefore the happiness of our contemporaries that is our main concern; we should be very chary of sacrificing large numbers of people for the sake of a contingent end, however advantageous that end may appear. . . . We can never know enough to make the chance worth taking. . . . There is the further consideration that is often in need of emphasis; it is not sufficient that the state of affairs which we seek to promote should be better than the state of affairs which preceded it; it must be sufficiently better to make up for the evils of transition."

—Arnold Beichman
Naramata, British Columbia

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"OPEN THE FILES!" demands Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan. And rightfully so. The files in question involve the federal government's attempt to entrap Qubilah Shabazz into a conspiracy to assassinate Farrakhan, who has long been accused of involvement in the 1965 murder of Shabazz's father, Malcolm X.

Federal prosecutors suddenly agreed in May to drop the murder-conspiracy charges against Shabazz if the 34-year-old woman, who has a history of substance abuse, would submit to two years of psychiatric counseling and drug and alcohol treatment. Sympathy for Shabazz had nothing to do with the prosecutors' willingness to strike a deal. Reportedly, the federal government's case against her stank so badly of entrapment that it decided to cut its losses before a real scandal emerged, with Uncle Sam in the hot seat.

Why does this case sound so familiar? The federal government spent millions of taxpayers' dollars to entrap, try, convict, and incarcerate the mayor of D.C., only to see Marion Barry emerge from the contretemps with greater popular support than ever before. One would think the federal government would be too busy with its trillion-dollar debt and educational system world famous for mediocrity and metal detectors to worry about folks like Barry and Shabazz.

But this is not the case, and never has been. Washington has always been interested in stirring up trouble in the black community, particularly among black leaders, both reputable and reprehensible. Columnist Clarence Page has rightly reminded us of the federal government's involvement with the Illinois Black Panther Party in the late 1960's. The FBI informant's contention that the Panthers were stockpiling weapons (where have we heard this charge before?) was the official justification for the early morning raid in December 1969, during which Panther leaders Fred Hampton and Mark Clark were killed in their beds.

In fact, throughout the 1960's, Washington feared nothing more than a united front among black leaders. It had a vested interest in keeping alive the war between Malcolm X and Elijah Muhammed of the Nation of Islam, and between Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. Many of Malcolm X's admirers today still hold the federal government in general, and New York City in particular, responsible for not providing adequate protection for Malcolm at the Harlem ballroom where he was shot, for local, state, and federal law enforcement officials knew that an assassination plan was in the works.

Indeed, "Open the files!" But not only on the Shabazz case. A full and fair investigation of the so-called Atlanta child murder case of 1982 is also in order, if for no other reason than to allay the still-lingering suspicions of many in the black community who believe Wayne B. Williams was framed and railroaded. A full and fair investigation of the Vince Foster affair is overdue as well. Paul Harvey recently reported that European journalists are staggered by the passivity of the American media in pursuing this story, but such kid-glove treatment really isn't startling at all. Only a foreigner misguided about our "adversarial" press could confuse the neutered American newshound for a bloodhound after blood.

And open the files on Jack Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., and on their respective assassinations. We know that both men were far from as virtuous as our textbooks proclaim, and that both were philanderers who associated with men and women of dubious character, whether mob-related or communist. So could the government's files really reveal anything shockingly new? On the other hand, it has long been rumored that a black man was involved in the assassination of King, and, as Oliver Stone has reveled in, everyone from Russia and the mob to the CIA has been implicated in the killing of Kennedy. Isn't it time to put the speculations to rest?

A bill passed Congress in the final days of the Bush administration that requires government agencies to release to the Assassination Records Review Board all information related to the shooting of Kennedy, and the review board began formal hearings in April of last year. Of course, the government agencies are allowed to retain any information associated with "national security," and we know how broadly such escape clauses have been interpreted in the past.

What about the assaults on David Koresh and Randy Weaver, which our Republican saviours have promised to reinvestigate? Even the *Wall Street Journal*, which initially accepted without question the party line on these bloodbaths, has now called for full disclosure on the part of the federal government and branded the official investigations of the two assaults incomplete at best, whitewashes at worst. President Clinton says that the Waco and Weaver cases are now irrelevant in light of the Oklahoma City tragedy, that the bombing shows the dangers inherent in not trusting the actions and explanations of the federal government. But such sophistry won't wash. Only children believe sin can be absolved by increasing the pool of sinners, and only the intellectually dishonest would contend that an event in 1995 could either discredit or legitimate decisions made two and three years earlier, which naturally must be weighed and measured on their own terms, in the light of their own day.

More importantly, checks and balances, not trust, forge the basis of our national government. As James Madison explained, "If men were angels, no government would be necessary," and "if angels were to govern us, no controls on government would be necessary." If Madison were alive today and advancing such sentiments, the chief author of our Constitution would be excoriated as part of the radical political fringe where "preachers of paranoia" engage in "inflammatory rhetoric" with gun nuts, conspiracy kooks, and assorted "inciters of hate," say with G. Gordon Liddy.

It is exactly cases like this one involving Qubilah Shabazz that fuel speculation about governmental dirty tricks and the misuse of power, and it is exactly such cases that we should expect more of if the President receives the authority to spy further on our private lives and further repress our personal liberties. Decent, law-abiding citizens are outraged by all forms of malfeasance, deception, and terrorism, whether instigated by racists and fanatics of the private sector or by "jackbooted" zealots of the federal government.

Indeed, "Open the files!" And now rather than later. For the issue is integrity—not of Jack Kennedy, David Koresh, or Qubilah Shabazz—but of a federal government that refuses to tell the truth.

—*Theodore Pappas*

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BOB DOLE is the last of the Taft Republicans, according to Murray Kempton—if only it were so! Isolationists (that is, Middle Americans who do not want our sons or brothers sent to die or kill on foreign sands) cherish Dole's remark in his 1976 vice presidential debate with the dreary Mondale: "I figured up the other day, if we added up the killed and wounded in Democrat wars in this century, it would be about 1.6 million Americans, enough to fill the city of Detroit." But the grim fact is that Bob Dole has supported every war the Empire has stumbled into, from Vietnam to Nicaragua to Panama to the Gulf, and whatever wholesome Taftite impulses he once had were purged when he dumped his dowdy first wife for the calculating dressed-for-success Liddy.

The "Democrat wars" crack still haunts Dole. He has abjectly apologized for it countless times, most recently on *Meet the Press*, but it will not go away, because it so vividly bespeaks an "isolationism" which has been forbidden since the death of Senator Robert A. Taft ushered in our poisonous bipartisan Era of Good Feelings. At his best, Taft upheld the nonentanglement doctrine of Washington's Farewell Address, which is why Taft's heirs are *not* turning their lonely eyes to Bob Dole—the Bosnia hawk, the senator from Archer-Daniels-Midland. Yes, in 1972, Dole rightly called the Democrats "traditionally this nation's war party" (conveniently forgetting 1861 and 1898, but then here in the United States of Amnesia the 19th century doesn't count), yet the only 1996 Republican hopeful with even a trace of a Taftite accent is Pat Buchanan.

Buchanan's case is instructive. He is the lone Republican candidate to oppose—loudly, tub-thumpingly—the Gulf War, NAFTA, GATT, and the Mexican bailout, and for these populist stands he is reviled by the corporate media. "Isolationist!" is the epithet—which is just another way of saying "someone who is opposed to killing or subsidizing foreigners."

Unfortunately, Buchanan seems to have muted the pacific tones of the anti-war America First theme he ran on in 1992. He recently rattled sabers when Saddam Hussein—taking his turn again as our Hitler of the Month—jailed those two Baedeker-less wanderers, and he can still utter the phrase "liberation of Grenada" with a straight face. Nevertheless, Buchanan's thunderbolts against the corporate state and world government contain more genuine populist current than a thousand mewlings from the Gephardts and Daschles and other paladins of . . . I almost wrote "the opposition party," but we do have a Democratic President, don't we?

(Unsolicited advice to Buchanan: combine your enthusiasm for national referenda with Ross Perot's electronic town hall to produce a new version of the Ludlow Amendment of the 1930's, which would have required a declaration of war to be ratified by a nationwide vote. An early supporter of the war referendum, William Jennings Bryan—and does anyone care to wager that next year's centenary of the Cross of Gold speech will go unobserved?—once declared, "I so believe in the right of the people to have what they want that I admit the right of the people to go to war if they really want it. There should be a referendum vote about it, however, and those who voted for war should enlist first, together with the jingo newspaper editors." Oh, to see William F. Buckley, Jr., parachuting into Kuwait City, and Susan Sontag charging with her bayonet through the streets of Sarajevo!)

Buchanan the irresponsible demagogue—he has the bad manners to exercise the musty right of dissent—is often contrasted with the oh so sober and responsible Senator Richard Lugar, a kind of McGeorge Bundy Republican who has never met a foreign involvement he didn't like. "Sane and serious," the *Wall Street Journal* judges Lugar. "He's very solid on foreign policy," gushes Brent Scowcroft, the military bureaucrat who advised George Bush on the most effective way to slaughter Iraqi mothers and children and conscripts and is therefore an "expert" on defense matters. "He's a very sound, very thoughtful and conservative internationalist." This describes every national Republican since the noble Taft's death, and it is the most irritating symptom of our one-party system. (Can we agree in advance to view Lugar's pathetic showing in the primaries as a referendum on the New World Order?)

Credit Lugar, at least, with validating everything the left says about Republicans: to kick off his presidential campaign he proposed to scrap the income tax (hurrah!) and substitute for it a noxious 17 percent national sales tax—thus effectively shifting the tax burden off the plutes who finance the Republican Party and onto the backs of the working slobs whose sons would fill the body bags under President Lugar.

There are plenty of Taft Republicans and Bryan Democrats out here in exotic places like Kansas and Ohio, where Madison Avenue imagines us to have physiques "like a rock" and the permanent government treats us like Iraq. The Republicans among us will probably vote for Buchanan in the primaries and we Democrats will go with Jerry Brown (if he runs; run Jerry run!), then in November we will switch to the Libertarian or Perotista candidate. But as the chanteuse once asked, it that all there is?

The Emporia oracle William Allen White—"fatboy," Hamlin Garland called him in his diaries—used to say that Kansas was "the low barometer of the nation. When anything is going to happen in this country, it happens first in Kansas." What is happening in Kansas today has nothing to do with Bob Dole. In 1992 Perot won 27 percent of the Jayhawker state's votes; a rambunctious secession movement is kicking up dust in the southwestern counties, where locals are sick of being exploited by Topeka and Wichita.

Out of this wonderful roil and boil might we finally get the third party we deserve? One that will stand for the individual against the state, for the neighborhood against the nation, for the village against the globe, for the local against the international, for the small against the big, and for good old American self-reliance, mutual aid, and voluntary cooperation against the wicked acronyms (GATT, NATO, NAFTA, and anything beginning with "U.N.") so beloved by the forces of consolidation, conformity, and worldwide standardization? A party in which a Bob Dole who cravenly begs pardon for telling the truth is pitied rather than nominated?

—Bill Kauffman

THE NATIONAL ACADEMY of Sciences, in a 500-page tome, has redefined poverty. Since 1963, the definition of poverty has been based on a family with two children and the family's cash income before taxes and what they spent on food. In 1963, a family earning below $3,100 was "poor." Now the figure is $14,228. Because of inflation, what a dollar will buy has not changed much in the past three decades, so the 13-member NAS panel proposes "a new measure that will more accurately identify the

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poor population today." The new poverty threshold would range between $13,700 and $15,900, "plus a little more" thrown in for other "needs."

At least three ideas in the report are good ones: counting welfare benefits as income; subtracting taxes from income in calculating the poverty threshold; and taking into account the city or town in which a poor person lives. After all, Food Stamps provide free food, taxes represent money earned but never used, and living in Manhattan costs more than living in Butte, Montana.

But the panel did not stop there. It would also change the threshold in another subtle but significant way. Instead of simply using after-tax income and what a family spends on food to calculate poverty, it recommends setting a threshold relative to the amount of disposable income left after the family pays for "basic needs," which are defined as food, shelter, and clothing. Moreover, the panel's plan would deduct medical expenses, health insurance premiums, expenses related to work, and child support payments when it calculates disposable income.

The proposal may sound reasonable. But the result, says lone panel dissenter John Cogan, is that the number of families considered poor will increase about eight percent faster than it would under the old definition because more Americans will fall under the threshold. However accurate that estimate is, Cogan is right about one thing: "These recommendations are not scientific judgments." In a five-page dissent buried in the report's appendices, he continued: "They are value judgments made by scientists—with a particular point of view. In essence, the panel has mostly eschewed [science] . . . and instead assumed the role of government policy maker." Cogan wants to know, for instance, "what scientific basis exists for concluding food, clothing and shelter are basic needs and health care or personal care services are not? What scientific basis exists for concluding that all types of food, clothing and shelter, rather than only a subset, are basic needs?" Cogan wonders whether Air Jordan or Reeboks are "needs."

Very good questions, since deducting health care, child care, and insurance premiums from a family's income could pull it beneath the poverty line. Consider two families, Cogan asks, both earning $16,000. By the panel's new measure of poverty, neither family is poor. Yet if one family decides to spend $3,000 on health insurance, it suddenly becomes "poor" and therefore eligible for a variety of welfare benefits. Oddly, Cogan notes, "after making adjustments to countable income, [the report] concludes that families living near the current poverty line have fewer countable resources than they would have under the current poverty measure."

Maybe, but pace Mr. Cogan, the lack of valid "science" is not the problem. The problem is "defining poverty" itself and the consequence of decanting one part of the population from the rest of it: i.e., expanding the power of the state, which in this country seeks to undermine the family and create a population of individuals whose needs are met by another "family," the state bureaucracy.

No wonder, then, that the panel also wants to change the definition of family, which would finish the job of pushing fatherhood and marriage out the front door. Instead of a mother and father, the family will now include "cohabitating couples." Of course, "cohabitating couples" and their bastards are not families. They are individuals living under the same roof, for neither one of the "cohabitating" couple has a reason to stay in the "family" without a sacred marriage vow enforced by law. But in any event, because so many "couples" this day and age "cohabitate," the welfare rolls will no doubt expand far beyond what they would be if government recognized only a man and woman married to each other. This new definition of family will implicitly recognize and reward the very behavior that may have led the "cohabitating couple" to poverty's open arms. "Cohabitating" invariably leads to little things called children, who in turn lead to poverty for those unprepared or unequipped to care for them.

Then again, considering their academic and government credentials, perhaps that's exactly what the eggheads who published this study want. The new definition of poverty, after all, will add people to the welfare rolls. Whatever Speaker Newt's "Contract" says, an expanding class of poor people will furnish the state with an excuse to confiscate more money from its subjects, which in turn will require it to further "define" and stratify the population. Once that has been accomplished, the government's doctors will have just the diagnosis they need to justify concentrating even more power in the bureaucracy and transferring even more wealth from the healthy rich to the sickly poor.

The NAS panel's work was begun when Democrats still controlled River City, but the timing of its release seems almost perfect: Republicans are talking welfare reform. Of course, the new definition of poverty is likely to be adopted by the phalanx of government agencies that attend to such matters. So once the GOP enacts whatever reforms its braintrust has in mind, it will not be long before we learn that more Americans than ever are poor, thanks to the revised definition. Using the artificially inflated number of poor Americans, the Democrats will no doubt concoct another "crisis." By that time, if Republicans still control Congress and have dismantled as much of the welfare state as they promised, it will be interesting to see what "federalist" programs they conceive to deal with it.

Republicans, we know, do not really mind big government and the welfare state; they merely do not like Democrats running them. So perhaps while the "experts" are at it, they can contrive a new definition for Republicans and Democrats that would clarify their difference and how they differ from us.

—R. Cort Kirkwood

OBITER DICTA: America's immigration disaster was the subject of a speech by Peter Brimelow at the Chicago Club on May 22. Chicago-area readers of *Chronicles* attended a reception and dinner at the Club hosted by The Rockford Institute before listening to Brimelow address the issues raised in his book *Alien Nation* and in *Chronicles*' recently released volume of essays, *Immigration and the American Identity*. In a speech marked by wit and his customary candor, Brimelow trenchantly debunked the economic and cultural myths that fuel open-door policies.

Chronicles subscribers who read the *New York Times* may have experienced a feeling of déjà vu upon coming across an April 17 story in the *Times* on the internationalization of crime control. This was precisely the topic Samuel Francis addressed in "Principalities & Powers" last January. To quote Peter Brimelow on *Chronicles*' coverage of the immigration issue, "You read it here first"!

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by Samuel Francis

Roads to Revolution

For at least a month after the mass murder in Oklahoma City, the official sentinels of the federal leviathan threw themselves into a state of panic that was probably unprecedented in the country's history. It remains unclear how much of the hysteria and paranoia they injected into their own minds they actually believed and how much they simply fabricated in a desperate effort to smear their enemies in the national outback and prepare for a concerted crusade of political repression. But what became obvious in the bombing's aftermath is that the elites entrenched in the megastate and its fortifications in the dominant institutions of culture and the media are coming to resemble the doomed defenders of 15th-century Constantinople helplessly watching the Ottoman hordes swallow one province after another and inexorably proceed toward a capital inhabited by an isolated and terrified populace of court functionaries, eunuchs, and courtesans. If the popular contempt for Washington that surfaced in last year's congressional elections excited the anger and fear of the nation's rulers, the Rorschach Test of Oklahoma City seemed to drive them over the edge into a condition close to full-blown insanity.

The unspoken premise of their response to the bombing was that the entire American people had gone crazy, tucking semiautomatic weapons under their windbreakers, concocting fertilizer bombs in their backyards, signing up with militias, hate groups, and fundamentalist churches, and harboring the darkest conspiracy theories about the United Nations, the Jews, the BATF, and Hillary Clinton. No one was safe. The sinister accomplices of Timothy McVeigh were everywhere, and indeed in the days following the bombing, the FBI received no fewer than 8,000 "tips" identifying the mysterious "John Doe #2" as the man down the street, the fellow in the supermarket, the guy in the next motel room last night. Reporters solemnly asked House Speaker Newt Gingrich whether he thought his mild critiques of "big government" had contributed to the act of madness in Oklahoma, and at least two prominent black journalists tried to blame the massacre on white men in general. Gun control groups tried to implicate the National Rifle Association, while the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, the major news magazines, and countless pundits and self-appointed "experts" on extremism sought to connect gun owners, home schoolers, the religious right, tax resisters, Confederate Flag defenders, largely nonexistent "white supremacists" and neo-Nazis, and, most of all, the ominous and sinister "militia movement" with the bombing.

Foremost to use the atrocity for political purposes, President Clinton, in what was perhaps the most repellent act in his low and unnotable career, exploited an ostensible commemoration of the victims of the massacre to link conservative talk show hosts to the kind of language that supposedly incited the bombing, and a few days later he tried to smear the NRA with the same opaque accusation. In the meantime, he concocted a frightening legislative package that enhances the police powers of the federal government to levels that Felix Dzerzhinsky would have envied, all for the purpose of spying on and controlling his more outspoken critics on the right under the guise of "fighting terrorism."

Of course, the entire delirium was founded on a false but never-questioned assumption—that the bombing was in fact the work of anyone on the "right" in any sense. Mr. McVeigh, who has exhibited serious mental problems since he was a teenager, had no connections to any right-wing group or movement. He had apparently attended one meeting of the so-called "Michigan Militia," along with his pals, the Nichols brothers, one of whom had started blabbering sentiments the militia members found objectionable and was promptly told to leave and not come back. None of them was ever a member of the Michigan Militia or any other militia group, as the Michigan Militia itself quickly announced, and some weeks later Mr. McVeigh's lawyers stated that their client firmly denied any membership in any such organization. Nevertheless, for weeks, virtually every newspaper in the country repeatedly inserted into every news story the sentence, worthy of Lyndon LaRouche, that "McVeigh has been linked with the militias." But as a matter of fact, the only real "link" that existed between Mr. McVeigh, the other main suspect, Terry Nichols, and any organized group was that they had both served in the Army and in the Persian Gulf War. Mr. McVeigh's zest for blowing up Iraqis helped earn him speedy promotion to sergeant and a chest full of medals, and it perhaps tells us more than we want to know that the unprovoked slaughter of Iraqis by American forces in that war seemed to elicit the only talents Mr. McVeigh possesses and that the Army seems to have been the only institution in Mr. McVeigh's life in which he was able to do anything well. If it's a "link" to Oklahoma City you're looking for, the Persian Gulf War seems to have provided some excellent schooling.

Whether the regime's campaign of smear, terror, and repression will succeed in silencing its enemies and critics remains to be seen, but regardless of the delusions and misconceptions the regime's watchdogs have invented, they also, perhaps unintentionally, managed to uncover a real and important truth about the major social and political divisions that are beginning to redefine American political culture. The truth is that, even though the Oklahoma City bombing was apparently the work of a small and isolated band of crackpots unconnected to any larger organization or movement, the ruling elites of this country are sitting on top of a political bombshell that is considerably larger and more dangerous to them than anything Sergeant McVeigh could pack into a rental truck.

In their zeal to expose the alienation and resentments that supposedly fed the bombing, the national media did in fact reveal at least parts of this truth. Thus, *Washington Post* reporter Dale Russakoff, in a news story of May 5, interviewed the citizens of Meadville, Pennsylvania, on their reaction to the bombing and their general view of the nation and the world. What he discovered was an authentic populist counterculture that defines itself outside and against both the federal government and the dominant cultural mainstream of sitcoms and fast food,

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fabricated compassion for minorities, and teary pseudoscience about endangered insects.

Few residents of Meadville seem to be members of militia groups, and few express much sympathy for or interest in them. One local, owner of a small manufacturing company, told the reporter, "I don't want anything to do with them, but I think I understand their attitude. If you ran a small business, you'd understand too. People are being squeezed more and more all the time. The government makes it impossible for small business to stay in business. Pressure just builds over time."

If that sentiment is dismissed as the voice of a disgruntled capitalist, it's matched by similar thoughts expressed by workers. A roofer told the *Post* reporter that his neighbors who own farms are being driven out of their livelihoods; "if a cattail grows, it's a wet land; if a beaver moves, it's a habitat." Another, asked about the Oklahoma City bombing, said he thought it was "a damned good start"; "if we think we'll take control of our destinies without some bloodshed, that's pretty naive thinking on our part. There's no peaceful solution to this problem. There are too many people living unfairly off the system. Every day I go to work to support people on welfare. The American dream they sold us was the American lie, they're waiting there to take it all away."

Yet another Meadvillian said he believed the federal government itself perpetrated the bombing so it could create a crisis and suspend civil liberties (and given Mr. Clinton's draconian "counterterrorist" legislation, that interpretation hardly seems implausible). "I'd just as soon go down the middle of the road myself," he said, "but to combat radicals like our government—the IRS, the EPA, OSHA, who come in our company like the Gestapo, picking on us because we generate money—you've got to have radicals like militias."

The residents of Meadville are in fact generally a conservative lot, and Republicans win easily in the area. But what these citizens have to say about their government and its agenda is just a little bit different from the harmless nostrums about "family values" and balanced budgets that Mr. Gingrich and Phil Gramm are trying to feed the country as the "Republican Revolution." What these citizens are talking about, even when they don't know it, is revolution plain and clear. Moreover, while most of their grievances about Washington are perfectly consistent with conventional conservative complaints about Big Government, high taxes, and bureaucratic intrusions, their explanations of their problems and their solutions for them are rather different too.

Many have seen videos or read material about the "New World Order" and the United Nations conspiracy to seize power and destroy national sovereignty, and not a few listen to shortwave radio programs that advocate hanging politicians with nylon rope. In other parts of the country, U.N. conspiracy theories, coupled with more violent resistance to taxes and regulation, form the framework of an incipient revolutionary consciousness. In some Western states, the *Chicago Tribune* reported recently, federal law enforcement officials have contracted what is now known as "Weaver Fever"—a syndrome characterized by reluctance to take armed action against dissidents, even when they're known to have violated the law. The explanation of "Weaver Fever" is supposedly that the feds are treading more carefully in the wake of the blundering and perhaps murderous siege of white separatist Randy Weaver's cabin in Idaho in 1992, when federal goons shot and killed his wife and son. The feds don't want yet another massacre because it's bad for P.R., you see, and maybe also they've begun to learn that if you shoot down innocent citizens long enough, the citizens start shooting back.

What is striking about the revolutionary consciousness in Meadville and many other locations—in the West and Northwest as well as in the Midwest and South—is that its adherents, Republicans and conservative though they may be, are not conservative movement groupies, and they don't learn their sense of desperation, their pet conspiracy theories, or their flirtations with political violence from conventional or mainstream conservative media and direct-mail barons. These are people whose consciousness is self-generated, bred by the economic and cultural annihilation they and their communities are facing, and the very fact that they are drawn to bizarre conspiracy theories and fantasies of armed resistance suggests that they lack any other plausible explanation for the abyss they face or any political strategy for avoiding collapse within it. Why shouldn't they talk conspiracy and revolution, when all the establishment conservative movement offers them is more chicken doodle about the glories of free trade, more unrestricted immigration, more police power for the federal leviathan, more tax cuts for Big Business, and more contempt for and indifference to the Middle Americans whose votes elect Republican majorities?

What the Oklahoma City bombing has uncovered, then, is the beginnings of a clear revolutionary movement of the right among Middle Americans, a movement that is indeed misinformed as to the causes of their dispossession and not particularly adept at understanding what to do about it or how to formulate or accomplish their goals, but displaying nonetheless a firm rejection of the federal leviathan and a clear perception of who their enemies are and what the triumph of their enemies would mean for them and the way of life they want to live. While conspiracy theories about the United Nations and other fixtures of populist right demonology may be useful in engendering distrust of what those demons symbolize, those theories fail to identify the real political and cultural forces behind the symbols, and often they merely breed a mentality of despair, an apprehension that the demons are invincible and that the only recourse is to burrow deeper and deeper within a foxhole of fantasies.

What the radicalism of the populist and revolutionary right needs is not only an alternative to a conservatism that is merely the obverse side of the megastate's bad coin but also an alternative to the conspiratorial and pseudoparamilitary infantilism that now informs it, a worldview that can more accurately identify and analyze the real enemies of Middle America who tremble in their salons over the march of an angry people they despise, and a strategy that can express the political goals that a Middle American movement should pursue, a political means for winning those goals, and an ideological vehicle that captures the real grievances of a dispossessed and exploited populace and mobilizes their anger for serious revolutionary victory. There is no reason those needs cannot be met, and those on the right who understand how to meet them need to start driving the vehicles of the Middle American revolution now, before Mr. Clinton's little experiment in smears and repression pushes them off the road.

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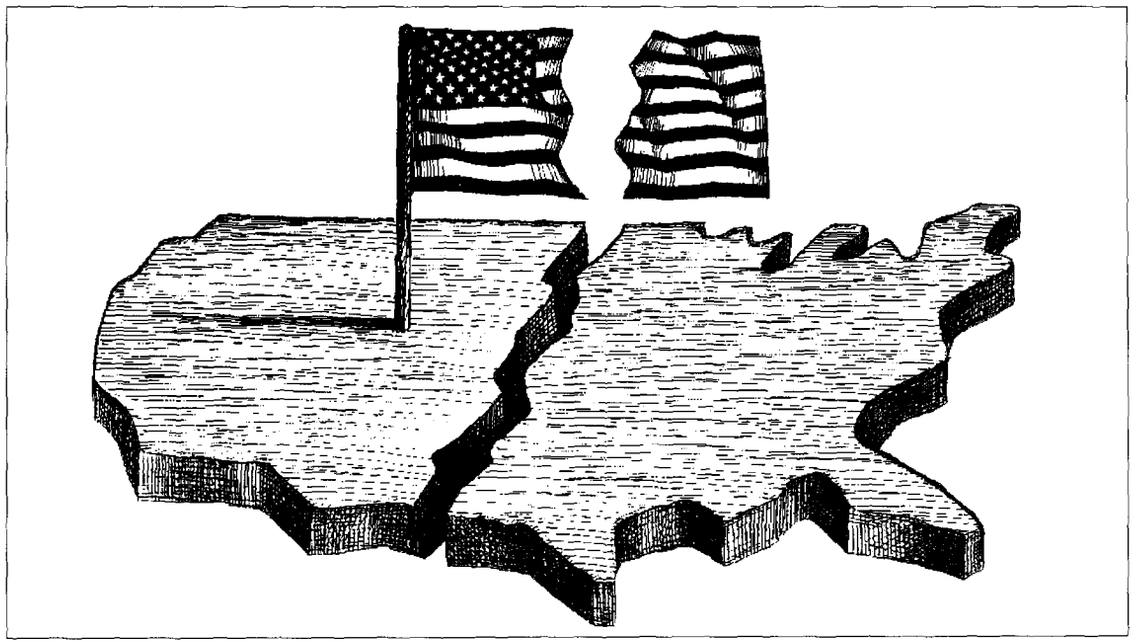

Igor Kopchitsky

April 19, 1995

A View to a Kill

by Thomas Fleming

I do not know about the rest of you, but I can say where I was in the days leading up to April 19. I had been in Scotland in the preceding week, and on April 17, I was in a hotel in Dumbarton, not 20 miles from the Glasgow airport. Exhausted from a day of driving in the rain, I threw myself down on the bed and turned on the television to get a last glimpse of international news not scripted entirely by the U.S. State Department. What I found, instead, was one of the lesser James Bond movies, *A View to a Kill*, in which 007 foils a plot to detonate an explosion along a major fault line, thus causing a catastrophic earthquake.

I do not know whether or not, even in theory, such a thing is possible, but the bomb that blew a hole in the federal office building in Oklahoma City on April 19 has opened social and political fissures that seem wider every day. On one side stand all the liberal, respectable people pointing their fingers at the hate-mongers who have dared to criticize the government—and standing with them, it must be said, are most of the frightened hate-mongers themselves—and on the other side a chorus of angry Middle Americans responding to the cries of "Oklahoma" with an antiphonal chant of "Waco" and "Ruby Ridge."

Listening to the radio in the weeks after the event, I became convinced that these two different sets of Americans inhabit parallel universes. On the right lunatic fringe, the talk was all of the mysterious government helicopter that was supposedly seen just before the blast. Caller after caller to Bob Grant implied that the Oklahoma City bombing is the Reichstag fire of the New World Order, and the level of detailed (surprisingly accurate) information on the criminal activities of the CIA, FBI, and BATF gave the callers an air of calm reasonableness that is encountered only in intelligent paranoids.

Much of the information comes undoubtedly from science fiction and urban folklore, but the paranoid view of the American government is widely held by people who know what is happening: how children are snatched from their parents by feminist prosecutors like Janet Reno, who terrorize the children or the mother into testifying to abuses that never took place; how drug enforcement agents invade houses, tear them apart, looking for an excuse to confiscate the property they have already inventoried; how innocent and legal gunowners are harassed and persecuted by agents of the BATF who shoot first and ask questions later; how hard-metal fanatics get put on trial for treason, because they prefer to use gold in their transactions. Why worry about the U.N. training Gurkhas in Montana, when our own government is handing out a 00 license-to-kill to any bureaucrat with an itchy finger?

On the left border of the lunatic fringe were the President and his friends, leaping at the chance to condemn anyone who had ever spoken the word "Whitewater," anyone who had ever imagined there might be something funny about the death of Vincent Foster (and so many other accident-prone FOB's). A John Doe warrant was issued, both by the President and by his loyal columnists, against anyone who thinks that we might have too many taxes and too few guns. On one level, of course, the President's calls for a crackdown may represent nothing more sinister than cynical opportunism, a chance to tar his Republican opponents with terrorism, a last desperate attempt to salvage his failed administration.

If that is what Mr. Clinton thinks, he is mistaken. Oklahoma

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City will turn out to be his Gulf War, a badly timed campaign stunt that tugged at the heartstrings until they broke. When all the yellow ribbons have been bleached by the summer sun, Bill Clinton will still be Bill Clinton, and the only chance he has for a second term lies in the hands of the Republican Party. If the GOP cannot find a better candidate than Robert Dole (many Americans suspect that Ronald Reagan was already senile when he was younger than Mr. Dole is now), Phil Gramm (whatever charisma is, Senator Gramm has the antidote), or Colin Powell (kiss off the angry white male vote), then the President has a fighting chance for another four years in which he can continue to protect himself from prosecution. Under similar circumstances Julius Caesar first invaded Gaul and then used his army to wage a civil war and subjugate his people. Fortunately, if Mr. Clinton has no more scruples than Julius, he has neither the genius nor the courage of a world conqueror. Arkansas was just about his size.

To realize how good a chance Clinton really has, you only have to consider the Republican response to the bombing: a somewhat muted echo of the President's outrage against militias (which have not been connected in any plausible way with the explosion) and "hate" groups. It is, apparently, a thought-crime to dislike the rich or resent strangers; and, if the President has his way, it will soon be *lèse majesté* to believe that the government is infringing our liberties. The Democrats are demanding (not asking) that Congress restore the FBI's Gestapo powers, and the Republicans will only go three-fourths of the way with them. In the Republican version the FBI will be able to snoop and spy only on really dangerous subversives, like members of the National Rifle Association or fans of G. Gordon Liddy.

Here we go again. A new round of right-baiting to answer an earlier round of red-baiting. Lincoln jailed his critics on the charge they were Southern sympathizers; Wilson locked up the Wobblies as traitors because they had printed antiwar tracts—before American entrance into World War I; Franklin Roosevelt went after German-Americans, did everything he could to destroy the careers and reputations of such critics as Charles Lindbergh and John Flynn, and in a great travesty of justice Lawrence Dennis, the mulatto reactionary, was tried for treason because he had accused FDR of fighting fascism abroad in order to impose it at home. As Phil Jenkins indicates elsewhere in this issue, what is usually called McCarthyism is just a fine old American custom of repressing dissent that goes back, at least, to the Alien and Sedition Acts. The Federalist Party, knowing it was losing ground against Jefferson, wanted the power to deport critics and shut down opposition presses as they smeared the Republicans as bloodthirsty Jacobins. (The Republicans gave as good as they got and accused plain John Adams of monarchical ambitions.)

The Federalists pretended to believe that Jefferson was another Robespierre plotting a Reign of Terror against the rich. The obvious connection between the Jacobin Terror and modern terrorism seems lost on political commentators who are looking for Muslim extremists and white supremacists in every car parked within a mile of a public building. But terrorism is primarily, preeminently practiced by governments and not by individuals or dedicated bands of fanatics. I do not want to minimize the evils done by the Brigate Rosse in Italy or the Baader-Meinhof gang in Germany, but in many cases the worst terrorist groups are encouraged or even sponsored by governments. The Soviet Union, for example, has backed Muslim terrorists in the Middle East and communist guerrillas in Latin America, just as the United States has given support, not always covert, to Central American death squads.

Terrorist groups are, for the most part, little surrogate armies used as unwitting mercenaries by national governments. Israelis scream bloody murder when Arab terrorists attack them, but they are silent, even defensive about their own terrorists. My father always used to say that organized crime could be shut down, if its friends in business and politics (Barry Goldwater and the Kennedys, for example) would quit protecting the Mafia. Perhaps he was wrong, but there would be no international terrorism without the support of national governments who find their services convenient.

> We have all been corrupted by government, but there remains a militant minority that is convinced that we could solve our problems, if the federal government would only stay in Washington.

The record of death and destruction racked up by the worst terrorist groups is a mere grain of sand compared with the vast Sahara of government terrorism practiced both by revolutionary regimes, such as the Jacobins, communists, and Nazis, by constitutional monarchies like England (the extermination of the Tasmanians, the Irish potato famine, the terror-bombings of Dresden, Hanover), and by such democracies as the United States (the Sand Creek Massacre against the Cheyenne, Sherman's march to the sea, the nuclear terrorism at Hiroshima and Nagasaki). Americans say they are terrified lest some lunatic in China or North Korea get hold of atomic weapons. Why? The only lunatic who ever used them was an American President, and the stupid controversy over the Smithsonian's Enola Gay exhibit reveals that if liberals hate their country, the conservatives are still in the phase that pop psychologists describe as denial.

A people that will not admit its mistakes is condemned to justify them. From time to time, we and our parents and their parents have acquiesced in the slaughter of innocent people, the waging of unjustified wars, and the suppression of every liberty guaranteed in the Bill of Rights. Periodically we go on a binge of self-recrimination over some no longer relevant episode—the internment of Japanese during World War II or the Cherokee Trail of Tears—and in pointing the finger at other people we can feel good about our own moral superiority, but to acknowledge the crimes on which our regime is based—

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that cuts a little too close to the bone.

I do not know what actually happened in Oklahoma City, and, in one sense, I hardly care. People die every day. I am sorry for it, but they do. Sometimes hundreds of Americans die in a plane crash. They are all strangers, and I eat a hearty dinner and go to bed with an unclouded conscience. Thousands of people may be slaughtered in Rwanda, and, if pressed, I may mutter a "tsk tsk," but what are these strangers to me, really? We weep readily over the death of a pet cat, but which of us sheds tears for the tens of thousands of babies murdered every day by their own mothers? Anyone who does (unless he is a saint) is either a hypocrite or a madman. All this shock and national mourning was a disgusting mixture of sentimental cant and hysterical weakness. If we needed no other evidence that television is an unmitigated evil, we had only to watch the evening news, as the networks vied with each other in whipping up sympathy for dead babies. What kind of a people are we, who can exploit the suffering of children? In the 1960's cynical civil rights leaders put children at the front of their marches, and I can foresee a time when political contests will be waged by competing videos, one side flashing pictures of aborted fetuses, the other side showing footage of child abuse and victims of right-wing terrorism.

The divisions in American opinion after the April 19 bombing do not follow the well-traveled interstate highway routes marked by Republican and Democrat road signs. Many conventional conservatives have been content to ignore the Waco massacre and profess shock and anger at the militant groups the FBI expects to find under their beds, and the most sensible comment on Oklahoma City I have run across came from Alex Cockburn in *The Nation*, who points out that it is only on the far right that you can find any compassion for the victims at Waco.

The most obvious divides are probably between the urban-suburban population of the Northeast and the rural-small town folk of the South and West—the Midwest as usual cannot make up its mind which side it is on. People close to the site, particularly the residents of Oklahoma City, are naturally outraged by what they see as an attack not so much on the feds as on themselves, but in the rest of the West and South, you can hear a swelling chorus of angry Americans who are smart enough to know that one explosion does not change anything. Their suspicions were immediately aroused by the President's claim that the federal government is not planning to deprive us of our constitutional liberties.

That, as every liberal knows, is a bare-faced lie. Liberals have been telling us since the beginning of this century that we have to sacrifice some of our peculiar liberties in order for them to make this country more just, humane, and progressive. To be a reactionary, in this context, was to resist the tide of history, to defend the individual against the state, families against social agencies, states against the central government. The only argument has been over whether this "progress" is good or bad, just or unjust. Even the constitutional argument has been a sham, since liberals will argue in almost the same breath that the Constitution is not being violated and that it is a historical curiosity, which long ago lost its relevance. As I have said before, there are honest leftists and honest reactionaries, but there is no such thing as an honest liberal.

It was clear, more than a year before the bombing, that regionalism is reemerging as a major factor in American politics. The West, as Chilton Williamson has been reporting in our pages, is up in arms again over the federal government's many abuses of power. I say "again" not just because of the Sagebrush Rebellion of the late 1970's, but because the West, wherever it happens to be, is almost always angry at the East. Even before the Revolution, the Carolina Regulators were at war with the aristocrats in the East, and not long after independence, Westerners staged Shays' Rebellion and the Whiskey Rebellion as antigovernment protests. There has never been a time when the West was not on the point of rebellion, and if the next revolution has to begin somewhere, it is fitting that the symbolic trigger should be pulled in Oklahoma. Oklahoma has always been an American metaphor. The last great land rush took place there, giving the state its earlier identity as the home of rugged and enterprising homesteaders who thumbed their noses at Eastern civilization. This was more than half myth, since the Homestead Acts were an early welfare scam designed to buy votes and enrich the railroads.

During the Dustbowl, the Okie, his farm foreclosed by the bank, became the rural victim par excellence. In *The Grapes of Wrath*, John Steinbeck used a family of Okies, the Joads, to illustrate the helplessness of ordinary Americans under the oppression of the bankers and the government they owned. But for Steinbeck, the Okie was a symbol, also, of militant resistance, and he makes his Preacher Casy into a Christian Joe Hill. This theme of resistance was picked up by a middle-class radical songwriter named Woody Guthrie, who wrote "Tom Joad" as a ballad version of Steinbeck's novel and an even more militant song on the career of "Prettyboy Floyd the outlaw, Oklahoma knew him well." Guthrie concludes his paean to Pretty Boy with the verses:

> Well, it's through this world I've rambled;
> I've seen lots of funny men;
> some will rob you with a six-gun,
> some with a fountain pen.
> When it's through this world you'll ramble,
> and it's through this world you'll roam,
> you won't never see an outlaw
> rob a family of their home.

Guthrie justified Floyd's criminal career on two grounds: the grotesque disparity between the very rich and the rest of us and the tyranny exercised by the armed hirelings of the rich. Prettyboy became a criminal only after he had been antagonized by an arrogant Deputy Sheriff who insulted him and used coarse language in front of his wife: "Pretty Boy grabbed a logchain, the deputy grabbed a gun, and in the fight that followed, he laid that deputy down." He portrays the outlaw as another Robin Hood or Jesse James, who robbed from rich bankers and gave to the poor: "And many a starving farmer the same old story told, how the outlaw paid their mortgage and saved their little home." This is the sort of leftist protest song we used to hear, when there was a left in America.

By the 60's, however, the American leftists had become so uppermiddleclassified that their primary issues were maintaining draft deferments for white suburban college boys, creating rights for college-educated women and interior decorators, and enforcing the Sierra Club environmentalism that sends working men to the unemployment office. If there was a Woody Guthrie of the 60's and 70's it was Merle Haggard, the "Okie from Muskogee" (actually Bakersfield, California), a patriotic

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car thief who despised both sets of Eastern liberals—the draft-card burners who betrayed their country in wartime and the patriotic stockjobbers who would sell it to the highest bidders.

Resistance to the regime is always strongest in the hinterlands, because the people of the cities are either cowed or coopted by their education and their habits of dependence. A few weeks before the bombing, gunowners and populists were gleefully anticipating the passage of concealed-carry permits in several states, but in the wave of antigun paranoia that swept the country, those bills were dropped, but not for long, if the President and his friends know what is good for them. If this nation is to be preserved in anything like its present form, then the vast apparatus of bribery and coercion we call the federal government must be reduced to its dimensions of 60 or 70 or 100 years ago. We have all been corrupted by government, but there remains a militant minority that is convinced that we could solve our problems, if the federal government would only stay in Washington. As Steinbeck's Tom Joad explained to his mother, the people would be all right if only the government would leave them alone:

> I been thinking how it was in that gov'ment camp, how our folks took care a theirselves, an' if they was a fight they fixed it theirself; an' they wasn't no cops waggling their guns, but they was better order than them cops ever give. I been a-wonderin' why we can't do that all over. Throw out the cops that ain't our people. All work together for our own thing—all farm our own land.

This is neither communism nor anarchism; it is only what most Americans wanted in 1776—to throw out not all the police, but only "the cops that ain't our people"—and it is all that any sensible American wants today, including the poor fools in militias and separatist sects, eco-freak communards and gun-nut survivalists, black nationalists and white supremacists alike. If they cannot get it, if no one is to be left in peace to go crazy in his own way, to rear his own children and cleave unto his own gods, then we are in for a great deal more trouble than is dreamt of even in the nightmares at FBI and BATF headquarters. The strategy of the federal cops is to make examples of a few designated leaders: kill David Koresh or Gordon Kahl and leave the carcass to stink on the front pages of the morning paper like a dead rabbit nailed to a garden fence post. For all any of us will ever know, some kind of federal cop is behind the shootings of George Wallace, Malcolm X, and every other uppity cracker, nigger, wop, or greaser who dared to look his betters in the face. The authorities love racial conflict; they do everything they can to provoke it, because if we fight each other, we cannot turn our attention to them.

Perhaps the convenient assassinations that adorn American history (the honest Garfield, for example, or McKinley the reluctant imperialist) were just lucky accidents, like the bombing in Oklahoma City, but for every future accident there may be a martyr—like Steinbeck's Preacher Casy whose murder turns Tom Joad into a revolutionary: "Wherever they's a fight so hungry people can eat, I'll be there. Wherever they's a cop beatin' up a guy, I'll be there. . . . An' when our folks eat the stuff they raise an' live in the houses they build—why, I'll be there."

All we ask is to be let alone, as a defender of the American union once declared, to eat the stuff we raise and live in the houses we build. Restore the Constitution, and there will be peace; take the occupying army of judges and federal marshals out of our schools and neighborhoods, and no one will hate the government. But, keep up the march step toward universal empire, and this nation will continue to split along fault lines that go deeper than anyone imagined in Bosnia 1985 or in the United States in 1995. Devolution or revolution, those are the only choices that lie before us. ©

Bird in Winter

by John Nixon, Jr.

The village ornithologist
Examined my word-snapshot, thought
Perhaps it was a kinglet or
One of the finches. Wren-like, pert,
More energy than matter, he
Repeatedly attacked my window.
A feathered missile, this. He saw,
Inside the room, real fern, live cactus,
A hanging vine. Ah, summer! Now—
And once again he hurled his weight
Against the view—if he could just
Persuade dumb glass to let him through.

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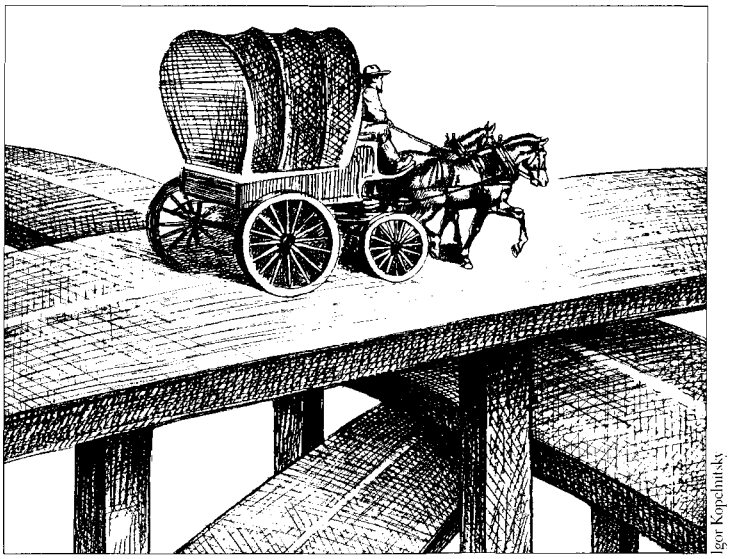
The Significance of the Region in American History

by Robert L. Dorman



Igor Kopelnitsky

During the early 1920's, 30 years after he had written his famous essay on the significance of the frontier in the nation's history, the great American historian Frederick Jackson Turner published two other works on the democratizing role of what he termed the "section." Sections, Turner wrote, "serve as restraints upon a deadly uniformity. They are breakwaters against overwhelming surges of national emotion. They are fields for experiment in the growth of different types of society, political institutions, and ideals. They constitute an impelling force for progress along the diagonal of contending varieties."

Turner was right. The section, or more generally, the region, is the primordial wellspring of American pluralism. The country's motto, *E Pluribus Unum* ("From many, one"), captures well what any map of historical geography might reveal—that ours has been a nation of regions. Provincialism and regionalism preceded any sense of nationalism in this country and, indeed, the very nationhood of the United States by more than a century. For 200 years after 1776, regionalism and sectionalism superseded artificial state boundaries and ran as a countercurrent to the modernizing and nationalizing tendencies of industrial capitalism and federal centralization. Regional cultures have thus been an essential part of the dynamic of American history, centers of resistance against the homogeneity threatened by "that all-destroying abstraction, America," as the Southern poet Allen Tate once phrased it.

The region inspires and embodies the sense of place, of rootedness in a particular storied landscape. Regional cultures emerged out of the processes of adaptation and interaction that occurred as diverse peoples with distinctive traditions settled and developed America's vast quiltwork of physical environments. A region might be as large as a dozen states ("the South"), with the boundaries of regional identity set by common economic interests, shared political beliefs, and racial solidarity. Or a region might be as small as a single rural community ("back home"), with an allegiance to place scaled by personal memory, family bonds, and neighborly ties. Provincialism, regionalism, and sectionalism are all respective expressions of such regional identity and allegiance, in workaday culture, in art and literature, and in politics.

Provincialism is the sum of regional culture as it is unconsciously lived and handed down from generation to generation by the folk of a particular locality. Before the modern era, provincialism was largely synonymous with folk cultures—small-scale, ethnically homogeneous communities bound together over time by oral tradition. After the onset of the modern era (roughly, since the 17th century), provincialism represented the survivals and residues of folk cultures that were able to persist against the progress wrought by commerce, industry, and state. Folklore, ritual, modes of work, architecture, clothing, dialects, and cuisine are some of the elements that comprise the unique flavor and backdrop of a regional culture as a folkish, provincial "way of life." The cowboy culture that arose in the West during the 19th century is a good example. It was an amalgam of still older provincial cultures (Scotch-Irish herder-ways long practiced in the Southern backcountry; vaquero skills and terms from the Mexican borderlands—ranch, lasso, chaps, rodeo) fused into an indigenous set of folkways appropriate to working large herds in the sparse Western landscape.

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Regionalism arises when a provincialism like the cowboy culture becomes conservatively self-conscious, when a regionally based "way of life" (or the remnants thereof) is threatened by the forces of modernity and efforts are made to preserve it or adapt it to such changes. Regionalism has especially attracted the interest of artists and intellectuals, who idealize and mythologize a regional culture that has passed away into history and who seek to conserve if not restore these older folkways and values in the all too modern present. Regional novels, paintings, histories, and social criticism attempt to reconnect the public with the importance of values of traditionalism, communalism, expressive individualism, and symbiosis with nature. To continue our Western example, the obsolescence of the open-range Cattle Kingdom by the early 20th century ended the heroic age of the giant cattle drives—the cowboys' heyday—but that age and culture were subsequently enshrined by the paintings of Russell and Remington, by the fiction of Louis L'Amour, and by institutions such as the National Cowboy Hall of Fame and Western Heritage Center. Beyond these largely "local color" efforts, regionalism in the 19th and 20th centuries could also become a species of cultural radicalism, directing hallowed folk-regional values as an explicit critique of a decadent, materialistic regional present (the writings of Bernard De Voto and Edward Abbey, for example).

Sectionalism, in contrast, is a provincialism that is self-aware and uncritical of itself, in fact, truculently celebratory and combative. Regionalism is defined by a demand for toleration and inclusiveness of all regions within a greater national unity. Sectionalism seeks to protect the interests of a self-defined regional community against the encroachments of other regions, the power of national corporations and organizations, or the excesses of the central government. Sectional defenders lambaste the evils and vices of outsiders in an effort to rally public opinion and secure unity at home; and for these same reasons, they sing the praises of the home region unapologetically. Sectionalism might not only resist cultural change—portrayed as threats from outside the region—but also any regionally unfavorable maldistribution of wealth, resources, or political power. Again the West provides a telling illustration, from recent history: aggrieved ranchers battling the federal government and national environmental groups in a campaign to preserve their livelihood and "way of life" (the remnants of cowboy culture) from access restrictions and high range-fees.

In general, both regionalist and sectional spokesmen have asserted the importance of local, indigenous cultural autonomy over and against the domination of cultural expression and production by a "cultural capital." Early in the nation's history, artists and intellectuals sought to declare cultural independence from Britain and Europe; cultural regionalism was one with cultural nationalism. But as the country matured during the 19th century, great cities such as Boston and New York became preeminent in artistic and publishing circles. Regional and sectional resentments thereafter focused on the "North" or the "East" for failing to reflect the tastes and values of the South, Midwest, Southwest, and Far West. Particularly by the late 19th and early 20th centuries, these issues of cultural domination came to be entangled with the issues of domestic economic and political "colonialism," the subservience of the underdeveloped South and West (the periphery) to the advanced industrial economy of the Northeast (the core). Thus was the national fabric fissured along regional lines. America, it appeared, was a "union of potential nations," in the words of Frederick Jackson Turner, and like any nation each sought advantage over the others in their economic and political relations.

This regional differentiation of America long antedated European settlement. Over many thousands of years Native American tribes became indigenous to regional homelands and developed into a wide variety of distinctive provincial cultures with an array of languages and customs. Consider, for example, the log longhouses of the Iroquois, the adobe structures of the Pueblos, and the hide tipis of the Plains tribes. After first contact with Europeans and Africans in the 1600's and 1700's, many of these tribal cultures were decimated by disease or displaced by settlers, yet their descendants remained to preserve essential aboriginal regional traditions despite the transformation in ways of life caused by frontier cultural exchange. This cultural exchange not only insured the survival of those tribes and peoples who could adapt some European ways, but also the survival of various elements of aboriginal regional cultures that were appropriated by white settlers and their descendants, including farm crops, trails (later highways), placenames, and folk heroes (Sequoyah, Geronimo). These residues represent the regional cultural persistence of the native "vanishing American" who never quite vanished.

The American regionalist tradition proper may be said to have begun with the Puritan leader John Winthrop in 1630, when he sat on the ship Arbella off the coast of Massachusetts Bay and defined the New England "plantation" as a special "City upon a Hill." Again, regionalism requires a distinctive local culture and geographical space as well as a self-awareness of distinctiveness. These famous words from "A Model of Christian Charity" are often credited with introducing the theme of exceptionalism into American thought, the idea that America was a place of world-historical significance, a Promised Land where piety, liberty, and opportunity might be enjoyed as nowhere else on earth. In the early Protestant terms that defined exceptionalism, America was an "exception" from and a blessed contrast to decadent Europe, the heathen multitudes of Africa and Asia, and the evil tyranny of the Papacy. Yet we should observe that Winthrop here identified exceptionalism with "New England" rather than "America" or the "New World." He anticipated the founding of other colonies, and his hope was that they might follow the model of godly society that he envisioned for the Puritans. God, he prayed, would "make us a praise and glory, that men shall say of succeeding plantations: the Lord make it like that of New England."

So began a refrain that was to recur in the regionalist tradition, arising out of far different cultural contexts and historical eras: the definition of one's regional culture as unique because it was exceptional, embodying the values of the "real America" in opposition to the Old World and even other regional cultures within America. For Winthrop as for later regional proselytizers, this recourse to exceptionalism was an attempt to rally community consensus and preserve traditional ways and values threatened by the forces of change, both internal and external to the region. In the case of early New England, "commerce" was the devil stalking the Puritan community, as Winthrop already realized, portending envy and division rather than a closely knit pious life as "members of the same body."

This refrain of a regionally seated exceptionalism was especially prominent in the writings of an important colonial observer of America's regional diversity, J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur. In his pre-Revolutionary work *Letters from an*

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American Farmer (not published until 1782), he celebrated the regional differentiation that since Winthrop's day had manifested itself in the English colonies. In the course of several generations, he noted, European immigrants had become "not only Americans in general, but either Pennsylvanians, Virginians, or provincials under some other name. Whoever traverses the continent must easily observe those strong differences, which will grow more evident in time," he wrote. "The inhabitants of Canada, Massachusetts, the middle provinces, the southern ones, will be as different as their climates." Crèvecoeur particularly exalted Pennsylvania and the middle provinces, where he perceived a society of small republican freeholders living well within a bountiful natural environment. This society, "the most perfect now existing in the world," had flourished under the "indulgent laws" of the Crown's inefficient and decentralized empire, fostering a de facto libertarianism in America that Crèvecoeur greatly praised.

> The country's motto, *E Pluribus Unum* ('From many, one'), captures well what any map of historical geography might reveal—that ours has been a nation of regions.

Unfortunately, when the British government attempted to strengthen its imperial administration in the 1760's, it provoked a revolution from colonial subjects who had grown accustomed to being but lightly governed. For Crèvecoeur, however, who was branded a Tory and had to flee the country, the Revolution tragically destroyed the libertarian framework that had nurtured his beloved regional communities of independent republican farmers. Instead, the patriots unleashed the forces of democratic mob rule, grasping commercialism, and government coercion. In his imagination, Crèvecoeur fled westward out of the lost exceptionalist promise of the new United States to dwell on the frontier among the Indians, who in his eyes yet lived as free men in communal harmony with nature.

Crèvecoeur's writings along with Winthrop's exemplify the recurrent preoccupation of regionalists to preserve the social foundations of American exceptionalism from the dissolution of modernizing change. The good society for them and for later regionalists had certain common characteristics: it was communal, symbiotic, agrarian, small-town, traditionalist, and self-governing. This conception of the good society was sited in the region because the processes of social, political, and economic development occurred unevenly in the United States, particularly in the first half of the 19th century: some regions became "modern" faster and more thoroughly than others. Industrialization and urbanization took hold earliest in New England and the Northeast, tied by railroads and canals to the markets and farms of the interior Northern tier of states out to Iowa and Illinois. Yet in the South, despite its commercially advanced staple crop agriculture, many aspects of older, traditional society still reigned, preserved by isolation and the conservatism necessary to maintain white supremacy. In the plantation districts, slavery perpetuated social hierarchy and the ancient code of honor; in the backcountry, yeoman farmers still devoted themselves primarily to subsistence rather than the market, and hogs and cattle roamed the free-range of the forests. Much the same situation was true of the Western frontier. There as in the South, towns and cities were small and few, and the traditional agrarian rights of squatting, subsistence, and commons outweighed modern commercial prerogatives. From North to South and East to West, the degree and pace of modernization were thus regionally differentiated. In the eyes of 19th- and 20th-century regional defenders of the South and West, the social basis of exceptionalism had consequently retreated southward and westward out from the decadent, class-stratified industrial capitals of the Northeast and into the virtuous provinces, where the "real America" yet persisted.

The defense of traditional regional folkways against railroads, reformers, and robber barons—the agents of the new—underlay a good deal of the cultural conflict within and between regions that marked the remainder of the 19th century. As the remnants of Puritan culture disappeared from industrializing New England by the 1850's, the famed regional renaissance of Emerson, Hawthorne, Melville, and Thoreau both reflected and decried the secularism, materialism, and conformity that were displacing the old village life. More overtly, divergent and clashing regional identities came to the forefront of national politics during the sectional crises precipitating the Civil War. Southern intellectuals such as William Gilmore Simms and George Fitzhugh attacked the heartless and dehumanizing free labor economy of the North while proclaiming the moral and social superiority of the slave system. In his 1854 book *Sociology for the South*, Fitzhugh acknowledged the cultural gulf that now divided the regions of America: the South "is as ignorant of free society as that society is of slavery. Each section sees one side of the subject alone." To Fitzhugh's way of thinking and that of other pro-Southern advocates, Northern free society was based on the modern "evils of universal liberty and free competition." The South, in contrast, was built upon an organic, paternalistic communalism. Northern free society—in the acrid terms of sectional debate—was a "monstrous abortion," while Southern slavery was a "healthy, beautiful and natural being." The rhetorical broadsides of Northern abolitionists and free labor spokesmen, needless to say, mirrored and reversed these social critiques. And the war came—misnamed by Southerners the War Between the States. It was a war between *regions*, each fighting to perpetuate its vision of the good society and thereby preserve American exceptionalism.

In the decades following the Civil War, sectional conflict again erupted out of the regionally differentiated advance of urban-industrialization. During the 1870's and 1880's, the destruction and debt caused by the war spread the cotton economy into the Southern backcountry, and along with it came tenancy and sharecropping. At the same time, the frontier closed in the Plains states. First the open-range Cattle Kingdom met its demise, and then the homesteader's frontier filled-up. Soon enough the Plains farmers found themselves in a state of debt

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and dependency much like their Southern counterparts, beholden to implement dealers and mortgage companies, hostage to railroad monopolies. The grassroots uprising known as the Populist revolt pitted (in their minds) the debtor West and South against the moneychangers of the creditor East. From a larger perspective, Populism represented the last historical occasion in which agrarian republican values animated a significant portion of the Southern and Western electorate, compelling them to challenge the power of national corporations and finance capitalism on behalf of greater local independence and communal cooperation.

The passing of the frontier in the 1890's announced the eclipse of rural America generally. By 1920, fully one-half of the nation's citizens would live in urban areas. The waning of frontier virtues and rural lifestyles was witnessed with particular acuteness in the Midwest, which underwent its own cultural renaissance in these decades. Edward Eggleston, Hamlin Garland, Mark Twain, Willa Cather, Sherwood Anderson, Edgar Lee Masters, and Sinclair Lewis were some of the luminaries chronicling the post-frontier, post-rural transition. Frederick Jackson Turner should also be counted among them. His 1920's works on the "section" perhaps more than any others synthesized a vision of the pluralism inherent in America's diverse regional landscape—at the very time when the remnants of that diversity seemed most seriously in danger of dissolution.

For by the 1920's and 1930's, artists and intellectuals across the United States had ample reason to appreciate with Turner the exceptionalistic pluralism of regional America. Further technological and economic innovation had fully unleashed what was perceived by this generation to be one of the most insidious forces for "megalopolitan" homogenization and standardization: mass culture. Radio, the automobile, the phonograph, chain stores, and motion pictures were spreading a bleakly anonymous mass cultural "world without a country" (as regional planner Benton MacKaye called it) over the diverse landscape of provincial America, threatening to obliterate it. Conscious like Turner of the long-standing regional tradition of which they were the inheritors, interwar regionalists were spurred by the profound crisis of the Great Depression to offer a vision of a decentralized, symbiotic "regional civilization" as an ideological alternative to a possible future of coercive socialism or the hegemony of corporate megalopolitanism. As Andrew Lytle advised in the 1930 regionalist manifesto *I'll Take My Stand*, "Throw out the radio and take down the fiddle from the wall." Only through the creation of the regional civilization could America return to and sustain its fading exceptionalism.

Andrew Lytle, Allen Tate, Donald Davidson, and the Southern Agrarians were the most famous members of the interwar regionalist revolt, but they were joined by Lewis Mumford's New York-New England circle of regional planners; by Southwesterners such as Walter Prescott Webb, J. Frank Dobie, B. A. Botkin, Mary Austin, and Henry Nash Smith; by Midwestern writers and artists like Mari Sandoz, Thomas Hart Benton, and John G. Neihardt; and by Western radicals such as Carey McWilliams and John Steinbeck. In the past and present of their respective regions, interwar regionalists looked for inspiration to the folkways and values of Native American tribes, the Southern yeomanry, the New England village, the hillfolk of the Ozarks and Appalachia, the homesteaders of the Plains, Southwestern cowboys and vaqueros, Southern black country folk, and still other remnants of an older, rural America that was fast disappearing. They hoped at the very least to preserve these vestiges of the country's folkish provincial past in fiction, histories, sociologies, paintings, and photographs. But their ultimate project was to reconstruct modern American culture and society in accordance with folk-regional values, a utopian project indeed: big city sprawl was to be replaced with small-scale "garden cities," and land monopolies were to be redistributed in order to restore a society of independent family farms.

The very radicalness and grandiosity of the interwar regionalists' vision was a hallmark of its unreality, of how far away from its folk-agrarian past the United States had "progressed" by the mid-20th century. Yet even into the post-World War II era, regional identities and divisions persisted in the face of the powerful homogenizing forces of television, the welfare state, corporate conglomerates, and economic globalization. The South in the 1950's and 1960's resisted the federal impositions of the civil rights movement. The West in the 1970's raised the banner of the Sagebrush Rebellion against federal control of public lands. Although both white Southerners and Western developers saw themselves as victims of Northeastern liberals in the national government, a historic shift in the regional distribution of power was ironically already under way. With the postwar rise of the Sunbelt, the former provinces and "colonies" of the South and West underwent urban-industrial takeoff, experiencing a spectacular increase in population and political influence, while the Rustbelt of the Northeast fell into demographic, economic, and political decline. New York City remained the cultural center it had long boasted itself to be, but in sports, broadcasting, fashion, publishing, and other areas of cultural production, it now had many rivals scattered across the country, most of them Sunbelt cities—Miami, Atlanta, Dallas, Los Angeles. By the 1970's and 1980's, Washington, D.C., also confronted a challenge to its power as a national capital, the object of ire for a conservative, antigovernment revolt launched from the South and the West. The United States remained in many ways a contentious "union of potential nations."

The centuries-old regionalist tradition, however, did not envision a good society of competing metropolises. Nevertheless, we can find traces of the legacy of Crèvecoeur, Thoreau, Turner, and Mumford in the postwar period as well. Environmentalists are to some extent their present-day heirs, with their concern for living symbiotically and preserving the integrity of the natural landscape. But the near-exclusive focus of environmentalists on wilderness landscapes has neglected what earlier regionalists prized, the cultivated agrarian "working landscapes" that still exist in some corners of rural America, and that regional planners and rural advocates have in recent years begun to deem worthy of preservation. Ironically, not only activism and regulation but commerce has also come to the rescue of regional rootedness and diversity. With public and private funds, many local communities have restored historic, humanly scaled downtowns and neighborhoods for residential, commercial, and recreational use. As tourism has grown in importance within the postindustrial service economy, state tourist bureaus have tapped into regional myth and history to package their destinations as unique (Southern or Western or New England) Americana. The uniqueness of place sells, they have discovered. These various preservation efforts maintain, however tenuously, our connection to the nation's rich regional past amid the mass cultural cacophony produced by Hollywood and Madison Avenue.

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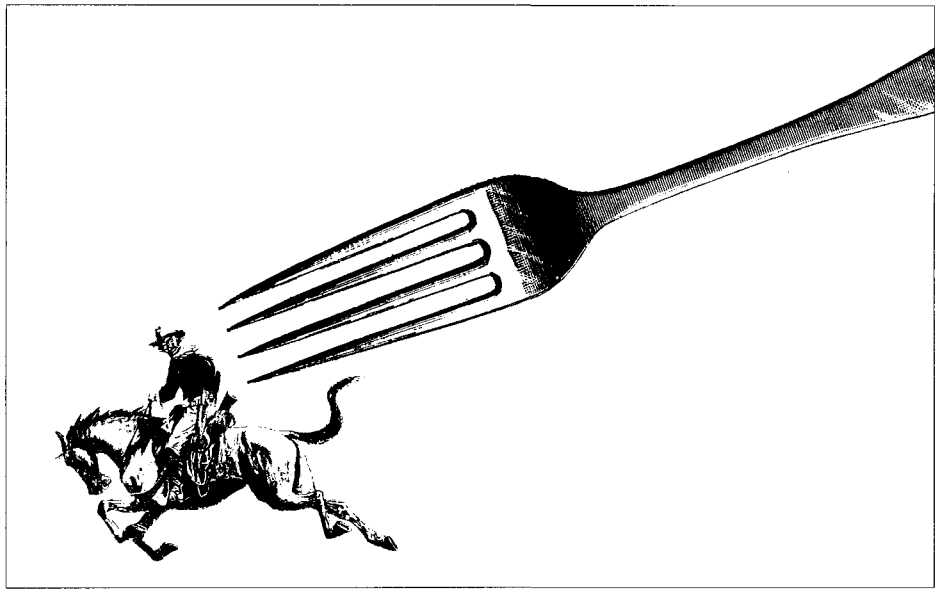
The Frontier

America's Broken Template

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.



Igor Kopelnitsky

While visiting out-of-state friends in Jackson last summer, I was involved in a conversation with a just-married couple who had moved to Wyoming two months before from Los Angeles for the now-familiar purpose of escaping drive-by shootings, berserk retired football stars, and the multifarious Sons and Daughters of Emma Lazarus. In the course of our discussion my hostess, a lady from Florida, overheard me warning them that Jackson is not Wyoming—a remark she later asked me to explain. My reply was an invitation to visit me at home in Kemmerer and see for herself, but all I needed to have said was that the state of Wyoming, unlike Jackson Hole, remains a frontier society—as do the greater geographic portions of Montana, Idaho, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah, and Arizona. Which is why, to answer another question by my friend, I choose to live in Wyoming. Bill Kristol can't find the place on a map, and Father Neuhaus doesn't know to look for it.

The dictionary defines "frontier" as 1) a border between two countries, and 2) a region that forms the margin of settled or developed territory. The American frontier as described by the primary definition was erased 20 or 30 years ago, and replaced by a no-man's land along the Southwestern edge of the United States. Strangely, while the frontier in the modern political sense has disappeared, the frontier of legend is still recognizable at the end of the 20th century, a hundred years after its official demise was pronounced. Though much—too much—in the American West has changed since the late 19th century, the basic characteristics of the Western frontier persist to this day: spaciousness, harshness, and scarcity on the part of nature; hardiness, resourcefulness, and independence on the part of man. While the Old West is dead and gone, the New West retains many of its attributes. (Westerners, statistically speaking, are overwhelmingly an urban people. The truth behind this often-stated and apparently contradictory fact is that millions of transplanted Angelenos, Chicagoans, and Northeasterners are *not* Westerners, and that the life led in Denver, Albuquerque, Phoenix, Las Vegas, and Salt Lake City is not the *Western* life, which dominates territorially, though not numerically, across the vast expanses still separating those cities.)

Of these attributes the first, most obvious, and basic is, of course, space. In spite of urban growth and the arrival of retirees, lone eagles and computer cowboys armed with modems, and second-home builders in the most picturesque mountain towns, the West today is what it has always been: a fierce wide-open place eager to embrace and engorge the naive and the careless. Between the Hundredth Meridian and the Sierra Nevada, the wilderness—not wilderness as defined by the purist prisses of the Sierra Club, but wilderness in every reasonable sense of the term—continues to be the overwhelming fact of existence. The second, equally determinant and inescapable, is weather, characterized by extremities of heat, cold, and elevation producing sandstorms, hailstorms, electrical storms, flash floods, and blizzards of Wagnerian proportions that occur above impassable mountain chains and across perilous deserts extending for hundreds of miles. In the rural West, a bank teller needs to be able to read the winter sky as accurately as a rancher or game warden in order to reach home safely at the end of the day, while oil- and gas-field employees contend, equally with agriculturalists and foresters, against the natural elements. Third, while most of the rest of the nation

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has wandered off into the postindustrial age, in the rural Mountain West the preindustrial era survives. The world that Western men, women, and children experience and confront on a daily basis is not the manmade artificial one that has interposed itself between man and nature throughout most of the rest of the so-called developed (meaning deconstructed) world, but the natural world in all its confusion, travail, obstinacy, recalcitrance, and danger, as well as in its openness and beauty. Fourthly, Westerners tend not to be, like postmoderns, specialists: they are likely instead to have the knowledge and skills to be competent in many jobs beyond their paid line of work, such as operating a backhoe, repairing a truck engine, building a house, shoeing a horse, cutting cows and sorting sheep, killing and butchering domestic animals and big game; felling trees. Their versatility makes them self-reliant, and self-reliance keeps them independent, without precluding the cooperativeness whose absence makes frontier life impossible.

The Hungarian-American historian John Lukacs expressed what he took to be the poignant brevity of a fleeting historical moment when he described the American West of a century ago as being in "that wondrous, half-mystic phase when the marriage of civilization to virgin land had just occurred." Yet in the rural American West today we have a Euro-American civilization continuing to hack out an existence for itself in a stark natural environment that after more than a century and a half has still to be dominated, tamed, and reduced to Euro-American standards of development, comfort, and security. In the West, life persists in combining the virtues and benefits of Western civilization with the precivilized condition that postcivilized people, in their cocoons of abstraction, either know nothing of or ignore, from the mistaken belief that it is irrelevant to human experience and abhorrent to human nature. Frederick Jackson Turner, who came to praise the frontier even as he buried it at the American Historical Association's annual meeting in 1890, recognized it as a uniquely American development, creation, and condition. "Little by little," he said, "the [pioneer] transforms the wilderness, but the outcome is not the old Europe . . . here is a product that is American."

"True human freedom," Edward Abbey believed, "economic freedom, political freedom, social freedom, remain basically linked to physical freedom, sufficient space, enough land." This freedom was partly what Professor Turner had in mind when he observed that "American social development has been continually beginning over and over again on the frontier. This perennial rebirth, this fluidity of American life, this expansion westward with its new opportunities, its continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive society, furnish the forces dominating the American character. The true point of view in the history of this nation is not the Atlantic coast, it is the great West." Having roamed the Mountain West for 18 years, I can attest to the physical freedom that inheres there; as a resident of Wyoming for the past 16, I have witnessed at first hand that "fluidity of life," as a major economic boom was followed by a bust to match it, itself succeeded by the present boom, based on recreationism rather than on the extraction of gas and oil, and certain to end in *another* bust, as the immigrants from California freeze to death and their financial tanks rupture. The frontier economy almost by definition is relatively undiversified, so that in the event of the collapse of any one of its components the remaining few are unable to absorb the human fallout, which is forced to become migratory once more, or live by its wits. (Freedom is never to be confused with security.) As the Indian tribes moved on in the wake of natural upheavals and disasters, so Westerners of the present time respond to economic crisis, abandoning the depressed oil fields of Wyoming for the gold mines of Nevada or a second-home construction boom in central Arizona: not infrequently they leave the intermountain region altogether, at least for a few years. These minimigrations keep the overall population sparse, and a small population in turn circumscribes the politicians' opportunities for demagogy and oppression. Bruce Babbitt, for example, had to leave his home state of Arizona and move to Washington, D.C., from which he is now trying to reenter the West by the back door.

In 1995, I or any other citizen of Wyoming can place a personal phone call to Cheyenne and speak with Governor Geringer almost at any time. Former Secretary of State Kathy Karpan showed up on the front doorstep several years ago, looking for my wife; last year when she ran for Governor I ambushed her as she was leaving the Frontier Saloon in Kemmerer and, in the presence of the waitress and three or four late diners, chastised her harshly for supporting a woman's right to abortion while claiming to be at the same time a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Church. In the Mountain states, state and local laws remain relatively few, and, unlike most of the federal ones, not oppressive. Sales and property taxes, except in places like Vail, Jackson, and Santa Fe, are low, and Wyoming—among other states in the region—has no income tax at all. We Westerners continue to enjoy, in substantial degree, the freedom that is ordinarily associated with 19th-century America in general and the American frontier in particular, but that has also largely been forfeited elsewhere in the country in the course of the 20th century.

In *The Winning of the West*, published only a year before Turner delivered his famous address, Theodore Roosevelt argued that the preservation of wilderness and a wilderness code was necessary to save the modern American from devolving into "the overcivilized man, who has lost the great fighting, masterful virtues." (Roosevelt's definition of wilderness was not the Sierra Club's: a region devoid of human beings, and of every kind of human activity beyond hiking and birdwatching. Otherwise, he would have advocated the removal of the Western Indian tribes, along with the pioneers, to New Jersey.) Though Roosevelt would surely be appalled by the changes that have occurred in the American West since his lifetime, he would just as certainly recognize the 19th-century Western character substantially preserved in a recognizably frontier setting. But the American West today, like everything else in America that is great and good *and American*, is under assault and targeted for destruction. It must be preserved; but through some means by which devolution is arrested without the motion and fluidity that makes it worth preservation becoming frozen. Once that means has been found, and the process of saving the West actually begun, it may be possible for the region to inspire the rest of the country by its example, and, with the aid of the Western mystique that has managed to survive a generation of debunking and demystification by left-wing and countercultural propagandists, lead the way to self-renewal. How could this be accomplished? By armed revolt, for one thing. Of course, I'm joking. For now, anyway.

Three factors distinguish the history of the Western from that of the non-Western states, with the exception of those made up from what in the late 18th century was known as the

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Northwest, and that modern historians call the Old Northwest. The first I have mentioned already: space. Not only does space confer an incalculable psychic freedom for all except agoraphobics, there is simply no substitute for living where the government—any government—can't find you. The second is that the Western states, from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean, were *territories* first—not political colonies, though I am aware that the history of the trans-Appalachia region in some ways matches and foreshadows the Western territorial condition, as it certainly does that of the Western frontier. The third is that these territories, because of their vast distance from Washington, D.C., and because the revolution in communications had not yet occurred, enjoyed *true* territorial government—meaning, except in cases of emergency involving Indian attack and foreign governments jousting for empire, self-rule. Although the federal government fixed the terms of settlement, assumed the combined role of real-estate agent and land-promoter, and created the greatest incentives (such as water development and generous mining laws) for settlers to go West, the territorial governments operated for the most part independently of Congress, while, within the territories, the counties—and, within the counties, the towns—enjoyed similar freedom. In territorial times, the most common agent of external interference, as well as of unrestrained and undemocratic power, was not Washington but the great and rapacious corporations chartered by Washington to "develop" the West, ship its resources East, and enrich themselves in the process.

The space remains. What the West needs to regain is the spirit and even the fact of territoriality, modified to fit present realities: at the very least a *true* federalism, similar to what existed under the Articles of Confederation, or even more so. In a time when such a sober and respectable critic as George Kennan has suggested that the nation be redesigned as an association of regional states, the idea may be more realistic than at first it appears. The chief problem entailed by the return to territoriality, or regionalism, in any form is the disposition of the federally owned lands in the West, which the Sagebrush Rebellion in the late 1970's and early 80's claimed for the Western states. This demand is perpetuated in the 90's by Western states' rights groups, and also by a variety of so-called wise use, or multiple use, organizations throughout the West. The question of public lands ownership is more than a vexed issue; it is a distressing one. On the one hand, it is hard to see how the Western states can be expected to achieve even the circumscribed federalism currently enjoyed by Maine or New York State so long as the federal government continues to own from 49 percent (Wyoming) to 89 percent (Nevada) of their physical extent. On the other hand, there exists the possibility (I would say the probability) that the state governments, once in full ownership of the former federal lands, would proceed to sell them off to the highest bidders—that is to say, to those with the greatest financial assets, meaning corporations and wealthy individuals from the East and West Coasts, as well as those transplanted to the great "Western" cities. The result would be that the West had escaped the iron hand of Big Government only to fall once again under the steely claw of Big Business: Big Government's ally, in fact its alter ego. Thus the West would have reverted to the colonial status (economically speaking) it experienced in the 19th century, with this difference: the colonizers would not only own and operate, they would *inhabit* the colonies whose economy they controlled! For all their meddlesome officiousness and petty tyranny, the small army of federal bureaucrats posted in the West from the Progressive era to the present time has effected no direct change in the social and cultural complexion of the region. Like the rest of us, the occupiers—some of them quislings—like to fish and camp, keep a few head of horses for elk hunting, and prefer a real bar to one that sells cappuccino in cups-and-saucers. Aliens though they are, they have proven themselves to be culturally assimilable. And their numbers are statistically negligible.

What the national environmental organizations have yet to grasp, as some of the local ones have already done, is that Bill Clinton and Bruce Babbitt expect to sell them out, too, after they have destroyed their enemies, the ranchers, miners, and loggers. Babbitt and Clinton are not interested in the so-called environment, but in stealing Western water, owned by the states, to deliver to the big Western cities whose non-Western inhabitants have the votes to carry the Western states for the Democratic Party. A few weeks before Babbitt, addressing a dinner meeting of Trout Unlimited, gladdened Ed Abbey's ghost by assuring his audience that his chief ambition in life is to take out a really big Western dam, he was in Sierra Vista in his home state of Arizona, promising the blueheads that he supports extending the Central Arizona Project's canal from Tucson to their booming but thirsty retirement community in the desert, 80 miles to the southeast near the Mexican border. As for Clinton, the central scandal of his administration rises from his operations as a land developer and speculator himself. (Does the Sierra Club really sympathize with his and his wife's scheme to build a recreational resort on the pristine banks of a free-flowing river down in Arkansas?) Still, a revival of the Sagebrush Rebellion, at a heightened and more radical level of political activity, is probably necessary to the survival of the frontier West. In addition to being indispensable as an engine of political reform leading to regional semiautonomy, it would go far to reinvigorate a territorial tradition of popular volatility and suspicion of government in the West. The most heavily-armed citizenry in the nation, angry and mobilized, already has the capability of making the federal government afraid of the people, rather than the reverse—as is presently the case even in the Mountain states, whose inhabitants perceive Washington, D.C., as the Enemy, with not just the strength but the will to destroy them economically. Already in Idaho, Oregon, Washington State, and Montana, private militias are forming and training, often with the sanction of county commissions, to oppose what they see as possible future attempts by an international government, aided and abetted by the United States government, to suppress American constitutional freedoms.

Though Abbey insisted that the West was won not by mountain men, Indian fighters, and prospectors but by Big Business and Bigger Government, he was only partly correct. *First* it was *won* by trappers, fighters, and nugget-panners; *then* it was *stolen* by the federal government and the corporations, which desired it for bombing ranges, nuclear testing sites, useless or destructive dams, giant mines and power plants, gambling oases, vast tracts of lumber to sell to the Japanese, and concentration camps for rich but equally stupid old people. "Money," Abbey said, "means power, not merely wealth. Money gives us power over others—to command their labor, their minds, even their souls. Even their behavior, conduct, attitudes. No wonder money possesses such glittering attraction for those who crave power. In a nation where all people were self-reliant—a nation of artisans, craftsmen, hunters, trappers,

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farmers, ranchers—the rich would have no means to dominate us. . . . Our dream is to escape the hierarchical order: neither to serve nor to rule." And so the preservation of what remains of the frontier and even, if we are lucky, the recovery of some of what has been lost, demands the reinvigoration and spread of classic Western populist attitudes and ideas, engendered and argued by the Populist parties in the post-Civil War era, and finally coopted and swept aside by the Progressive Movement presenting itself as the real thing, though in fact it was its antithesis: a populism for the overrich, the overeducated, the genteelly deracinated, the politely godless, and the hubristic. The future of the frontier depends not on curbing the government in Washington alone, but the corporate boards of Canadian companies who own and direct the largest mining projects currently operating in or planned for the American West, and those in Japan, which are rapidly buying up and buying out as many large-scale ranches as they can get their hands on. Power is power, whether economic or governmental, since both kinds of power are political, and politics—as water used to in the West before the federals created their Steven Spielberg system of dams, pumps, and pipelines through the region—seeks its own level.

Once the Western states, acting in concert or as a federation, have made discernible progress in regaining the political and social freedoms that the federal politicians either wrested from them or sweet-talked them into surrendering, the West will find itself in a position to proselytize the other American states and regions, by argument and by example, for the purpose of persuading them likewise to recapture the political, economic, and social fluidity and simplicity of republican times. Obviously, Rhode Island cannot expand its territory to equal that of Montana, and the population of New York City cannot independently raise and butcher its own food, though New Yorkers are becoming increasingly adept at slaughtering what they do not eat. Every part of the United States began as a frontier society and evolved into something else. Only in the West, perhaps, is the frontier the final, which is to say the *natural* and *best* form, because of its spaciousness, its harshness, and—especially—its lack of that most basic resource: water. But this does not mean that other regions, having left the frontier stage long ago, have not developed beyond the form that is natural and appropriate to *them*, and to which in their own best interests they owe it to themselves to return. We tend to think that progress means taking a thing as far as you can carry it, and of the frontier as only a very small beginning in pursuit of something far greater, while in fact it may and should be its own end. And while it is indeed impossible to turn back the clock, it is very possible to renovate historically the house that encompasses the clock. In fact, it is being done every day.

America, it is said, has no traditions (except for unlimited immigration, of course, which former Governor Richard Lamm of Colorado correctly predicts will destroy the West unless it is drastically curtailed): only the prospect of endless change, perennial flux, continuous adaptation, all of them directing us in a predetermined trajectory from which we cannot—and should not—hope to deviate. The truth is, we have one great and overriding tradition: the frontier, which led and shaped the history and form of America from 1607 until 1890, nearly three-quarters of our history as a people. It is the last 105 years, not the 283 preceding them, that have witnessed the betrayal of the American ideals that our increasingly un-American politicians claim to be defending—against Americans! ©

Oak

by John Nixon, Jr.

Ignore that stylish wood
The social climber spoke
Of lovingly. For good,
Stout character, choose oak.

Toughly as when it grew
Straight in the green outdoors,
Oak will be walls for you
And furniture and floors.

It makes a cordial blaze
Whenever cold wind moans—
Or, after all your days,
A box to hold your bones.

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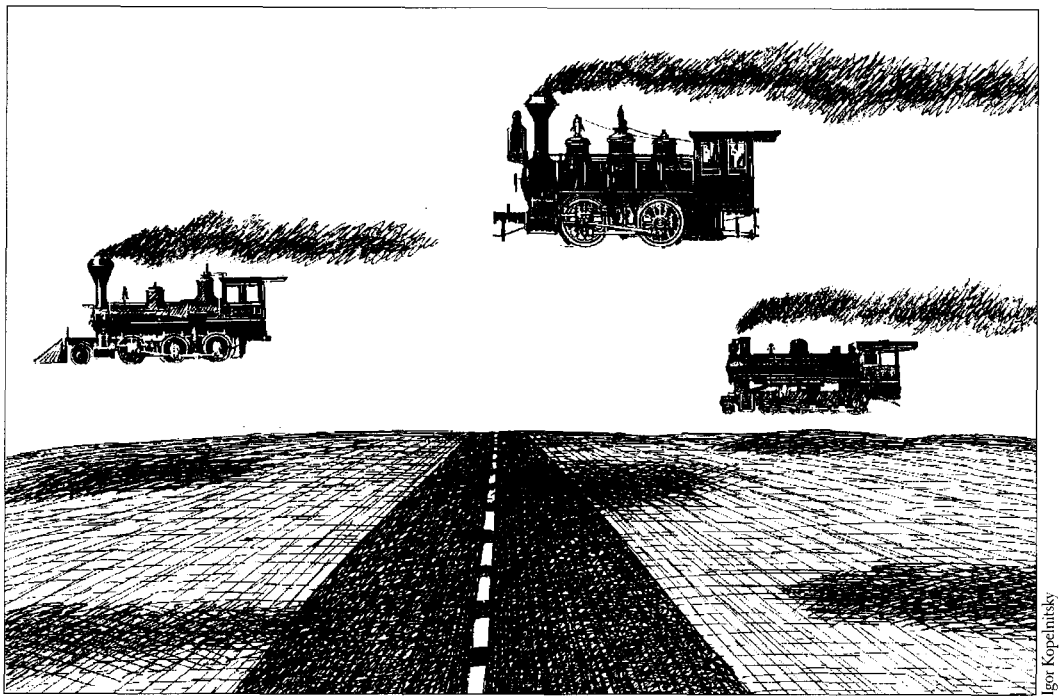
The Midwestern Identity

by Allan Carlson



Igor Kopelnitsky

Ask a contemporary American to characterize "the Midwestern identity" and you will likely get, besides much puzzlement, one of two answers. Most would eventually reply "Big Ten Football," but public radio listeners, always clued in on the big questions, would probably respond "Lake Wobegon," the Minnesota town that time forgot, that the decades cannot improve. Since college football has become merely another big business, driven by television contracts and nationwide recruiting, only the second answer need concern us.

As the focus of "Prairie Home Companion"—the Garrison Keillor radio show that ran nationally with energy and wit between 1981 and 1987 and in diminished form again since 1993—Lake Wobegon represents a mythic world. Located in Mist County, the town is peopled mainly by German Catholics and Norwegian Lutherans, the Swedes having settled in the next county over. The town's economic base might be called agrarian socialist. Farms run by Norwegian bachelors produce for Lake Wobegon's modest export market, while village socialism guides other economic relations: you buy down at Hank's Five and Dime, because Hank is your neighbor. Social life centers on The Sons of Knute Lodge, and the Knights of Columbus.

Keillor's Lake Wobegon is neither myth nor fiction. It describes the only true Midwest: not the Midwest of 1995, to be sure, but the one that existed circa 1900. At that time, sympathetic observers saw a great agrarian civilization taking form in the Upper Mississippi Valley, in Illinois, north of Springfield, in Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, and the eastern thirds of Nebraska, and North and South Dakota. Liberty Hyde Bailey, Dean of Cornell's College of Agriculture and America's foremost botanist and horticulturist, reported that "a very distinct form of society is developing in the great farming regions of the Mississippi Valley . . . the exploiting and promoting occupancy of those lands is passing and a stable progressive development appears." James "Tama Jim" Wilson of Iowa, United States Secretary of Agriculture for a record 16 years, said about that Midwest, "There was never a country so rich as this. There was never a country so prosperous. . . . There was never a people so contented as ours. . . . A new dignity has come to agriculture, along with its economic strength, and the farmer has a new horizon . . . which is more promising than the skyline of the city."

Iowa was at the center of this informal rural empire, a rule symbolized by the men of that state who would serve as Secretary of Agriculture: "Tama Jim" Wilson, for three Presidents, from 1897 to 1913; Henry Wallace, Sr., from 1921-24; and Henry Wallace, Jr., from 1933 to 1940. According to the census of 1900, Iowa claimed the tenth largest population among the states (today, it ranks 30th) and 11 seats in a United States Congress of 386 (today it has five of 435). Also in 1900, 53 percent of all male workers in the state were farmers or farm workers; in Minnesota, 46 percent; in Wisconsin, 42 percent; in North Dakota, 67 percent. If one added in those laboring at tasks we now call agribusiness—the processing and transportation of grain and meat, the production of farm implements, and so on—roughly two-thirds of the region's workers were agricultural. Despite agrarian crises in the 1870's and 1890's marked by falling commodity prices and credit squeezes, the region's farm economy seemed solid again by 1900. Average farm size in Iowa was 151 acres in 1890, and 151.2 in 1900, sug-

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gesting no trend toward consolidation. Farm technology was stable, resting still on true horse power, and prices for farm commodities were relatively good. Small towns blossomed across the landscape, to serve this farm-based economy. Indeed, from 1900 to as late as 1980, Iowa would claim, in absolute terms, more incorporated towns of under a thousand people than any other state in the union.

The Upper Midwest was also a land of hyphenated Americans. In 1900, this region counted over 26 million persons, making it the most populated census region of the country. And over 44 percent of these Americans had either both or one parent who were foreign-born. In Illinois, the figure was 51 percent; in Wisconsin, 71 percent; in Minnesota, 75 percent. In the whole of the United States, one out of every four males of voting age was foreign-born; in the Upper Mississippi Valley, nearly half were.

The dominant hyphenated groups in 1900, by any measure, were the Germans and the Scandinavians. A survey of foreign language newspapers in the United States in 1892 counted: 727 German-language newspapers (including six dailies in Milwaukee alone), 112 Scandinavian newspapers, 40 French papers, and 28 Spanish papers. The Germans were the most assertive, as well as the most numerous. In 1900, the Census Bureau counted 6,235,000 persons with both parents having been born in Germany; another 1,585,000 persons with one German-born parent; for a total of 7,820,000, over 11 percent of the United States population. Heaviest concentrations of these German-Americans were in the rural regions of Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, and Michigan. Half were Roman Catholic; a fair number of the rest belonged to the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, sternly orthodox, emphasizing clerical authority, and committed to parochial schools using the German tongue. In 1899, the United States Congress recognized the political potency of this ethnic bloc and formally chartered the National German Alliance, dedicated to the promotion of German culture in America. More aggressive forms of "Germanism" were advanced by the Educational Alliance for the Preservation of German Culture in Foreign Lands.

With German prestige in science, music, art, and philosophy at a peak, German-American intellectuals showed, according to one writer, "a growing bumptiousness" after 1900. Pressure grew for the teaching of German in the public schools, while criticism of America's low cultural and educational standards mounted in the German-American press.

The Swedish-Americans numbered 1,082,000 in 1900, heavily concentrated in Northern Illinois and Minnesota. Norwegian-Americans numbered 785,000, found primarily in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Ethnically based Lutheran churches continued to use the old languages, Swedish and Norwegian theaters flourished in Chicago and Minneapolis, and colleges using the Scandinavian tongues sprouted throughout the region. Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish publishing houses produced hundreds of titles each year. As late as 1910, the proportion of Swedish to English titles published by the leading Augustana Book Concern was five to one. Secular societies such as the Vasa Order and the Independent Order of Vikings, ethnically based savings and insurance associations and innumerable choral societies further bound together these distinctive communities. Swedish scholar Johan Persson predicted that the preservation of the Swedish language in America, and the artistic freedom found there, would soon give rise to a distinctive Swedish-American literature. As the century turned, the president of Illinois' Augustana College predicted that Swedish-America would survive for another hundred years as a strong and distinct cultural entity.

At the time, the question arose in these communities: What did it mean to be an American? Or, as the old Americans sometimes put it: Did these Midwestern ethnic enclaves threaten American unity?

An argument, at least, could be made that German separatist sentiments held some strength. Many old-stock Americans certainly suspected that a large number of their German-American neighbors would have been pleased to see the Midwest relabeled "The Independent Republic of Germania." In his history of the German-Americans, Richard O'Connor states that the Germans "were the most dangerously volatile addition to the ethnic mixture which makes up the American." German was, after all, the "universal Latin of European radicalism," and German names were prominent on the lists of socialist and anarchist agitators in America.

Back in the old country, German strategists also saw the overseas German population as a geopolitical asset. In his widely publicized 1911 book, *Germany and the Next War*, Prussian General von Bernhardi predicted that in the event of war with Great Britain, the United States could be expected to invade and occupy Canada, reasoning: "The German-Americans have formed a political alliance with the Irish and, thus united, constitute a power in the state with which the American government must reckon."

Fewer in number, Swedish-Americans rarely dreamed of secession. However, cultural nationalism was strong among the religious and educational elites, and the maintenance of a separate culture stood as their goal.

But even this limited dream, I assert, was fated to an early demise. In 1904, Rudolf Kjellen, professor of geopolitics at Sweden's Uppsala University, visited Swedish-America. Expected to deliver a message of strong Swedish nationalism, for which he was famous, Kjellen instead told the leadership of Swedish-America, assembled at Augustana College, that their community would and must die. The character of a people, he said, was conditioned by the land and climate in which they dwelled. The Swedes had strong and varied ties to the Baltic region. But if every Swede were somehow transported to the shores of the Mississippi, a new Sweden would not be built there. "The landscape has more power than memories," Kjellen asserted, and in the new physical environment, the folk character would change. Swedish-America, he continued, was built not on a mountain, but on a swiftly moving stream. He declared to his audience: "Your past is at one with ours; your present and future are and shall be different." America would win out, because the power of assimilation between a landscape and a people would overcome all hindrances. The Swedish element, he said, must lose itself within the new nation, just as distinctive German and English elements must also disappear.

Indeed, in retrospect, we can see that German-America and Swedish-America were already dissolving by 1900, 17 years before war-induced hysteria brought direct suppression. The last large influx of German immigrants came in 1891-92, when 244,000 arrived. Those very years also proved to be the peak period for the German-language press. By 1904, with few new immigrant boats coming from Bremen, nearly one-quarter of the German-language periodicals had disappeared. Not only had numbers changed; but so had content. In 1890, news of the old

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country predominated. By 1905, local and regional stories covered the front pages. While German-Americans were firmly united in opposition to the Prohibition movement, they divided on virtually all other political issues. The Democratic, Republican, Progressive, and Socialist parties all claimed significant numbers of German-American adherents.

As early as 1900, the Swedish language was in decline in the colleges, the requirement of "an ability to read and write Swedish" disappearing from the Augustana College catalog that year. Without a continuing influx of new immigrants, the assimilation process, driven largely by interaction with the new landscape and by the integrative force of the economy, went into high gear.

Symbolic of this, several German-American groups reversed their position on immigration in the 1890's, joining the anti-immigration American Protective Association. Scandinavian groups soon followed suit. Indeed, so many Swedish-Americans in Minneapolis joined the A.P.A. in 1894 that the A.P.A. journal in that town merged with the leading Swedish-language newspaper. New interests and new worries were superseding immigrant ties to the old countries.

By 1914, however, a "Midwest identity" of sorts was taking form, much as Kjellen had seen, one defined by small towns, agricultural pursuits, the village socialism of the early cooperatives, and a distrust of centralizing government and foreign adventuring. Strong elements from the German and Scandinavian culture and characters could be found in this mix, as could influences from the English-speaking America that produced agrarians like "Tama Jim" Wilson. From 1900 to 1914, this Midwest began to find artistic expression as well, in sculptors such as Loredo Taft; architects such as Wright and Saarinen; artists such as Wood, Sandzen, and Benton; poets such as Lindsay, Sandburg, and Masters; and novelists such as Ole Rölvaag.

But this distinctive regional "America" lasted barely four decades, dying as a coherent entity sometime in the early 1950's. Space does not allow me a detailed review of this demise, but I would offer a few thoughts. Certainly, the technological revolution stimulated by the internal combustion engine played a role, after 1920, in destabilizing the labor-intensive agrarian economy on which this unique "Middle West" partially depended. Another material factor pushing for change was the relatively low return of agricultural product to capital, which diverted ever more wealth into industrial investment, stimulating in turn the vast expansion of cities such as Chicago and Detroit, pressing ever deeper into the countryside. But inept government agricultural policy played a more crucial role. Wage, price, and production controls imposed during wartime in 1917-19, the rapid return to a disoriented market in the 1920's, the Agricultural Adjustment Act and its clones in the 1930's, and the second forced march of agriculture into emergency or wartime socialism in the 1941-45 period left the nascent Agrarian Republic in ruins.

By the 1950's, the region was losing many of its distinguishing qualities, becoming part of the universalized New America being crafted around the burgeoning suburbs, a province of the Democratic Empire. Today, the Midwest, as such, exists in the scattered and abused villages and heavily mortgaged family farms of a backcountry, depopulated and poor. And it exists, in the legend of Lake Wobegon, off in distant Mist County.

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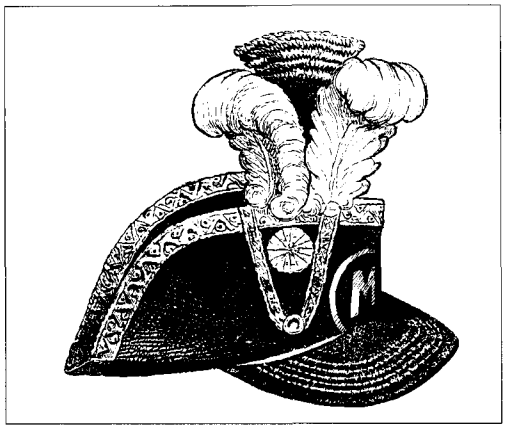
Eminent Southrons and Cinematic Slander

by John Shelton Reed



Igor Kopelnitsky

Some folks have been kind enough to notice my absence from these pages, and a few have been even kinder and expressed regret at it. The fact is that my wife Dale and I are working on a book. It will be called *1001 Things Everyone Should Know about the South*, and we hope to have it out before the Atlanta Olympics in 1996. The idea is to remind visitors that they've come to a place with a complex and fascinating history and culture. Of course, if we can sell it to even a fraction of the two million visitors that are expected, it will do good things for our bank account, too. Anyway, that's what I've been doing instead of writing for *Chronicles*, and I thought I'd give you a couple of samples, since I don't have anything else to offer these days.

First, some items about individual Southerners. It turns out that a great many of our 1001 "things" are people—not surprising, because what's most distinctive about the South (at least these days) is Southerners, who tend to be colorful, cantankerous, idiosyncratic, engaging folks.

Here are a baker's dozen, in more or less chronological order. All the major areas of Southern accomplishment—agriculture, sports, food, literature, journalism, the decorative arts, music, war, politics, religion, law—are represented here, one way or another, although these are not (Lord knows) "representative" Southerners. Some of these folks are well-known, others were once, a few never were but we think they should be. It turns out the examples are multicultural and "gender-balanced," but that's an accident.

Elizabeth Lucas Pinckney was the daughter of a British officer who served in the West Indies. Born in 1722, probably in Antigua, and educated in England, she was left at age 16 by her father to manage three South Carolina plantations in which he had interests. Experimenting with indigo, she found a strain suitable to local conditions and learned the technique of producing dye from it. Her success set off a boom in the crop: by 1775 indigo made up a third of South Carolina's exports. In 1744 she married into the remarkable Pinckney family of South Carolina: her sons Charles Cotesworth and Thomas carried on the family tradition as prominent soldiers and politicians.

William R. Johnson was a famous horse-race promoter from North Carolina, who specialized in intersectional races. In one of his races the backers of the Southern horse reportedly won $2 million. But Johnson's best-known promotion came in 1823, when his syndicate challenged the great northern champion, American Eclipse, to a three-heat race at Union Course, Long Island. Recognizing that their horse, Sir Henry, was outclassed, the Southerners ran him all-out in the first heat and won it, while the northern jockey prudently saved his horse for the last two heats, which he won from the exhausted Sir Henry. The Southerners lost the $10,000 stake, but won far more from heavy side-bets on the first heat. There's a metaphor there somewhere.

Thomas Day (ca. 1801-1861), a free black cabinetmaker in Milton, North Carolina, was the owner of North Carolina's largest antebellum cabinet shop. By 1850, he employed 12 people, including a number of slaves, and had a capital investment of $15,800. He built custom interiors and furniture for public buildings (including the Presbyterian church in Milton, of which he was a deacon, and the University of North Carolina), for the governor, and for many private houses. He must have been a talented diplomat—he was a trustee of the town bank and was so well respected that the North Carolina General Assembly passed a special bill to let him bring his wife from Virginia (blacks were not allowed to move across state lines).

Louis Moreau Gottschalk was America's first piano virtuoso and the first composer to exploit American ethnic musical styles. Born in New Orleans in 1829, by the age of 19 he had overcome considerable prejudice (one critic wrote, "An American composer, good God!") to conquer Europe with his playing, his romantic looks, and his compositions based on Afro-American and Creole music. Berlioz and Chopin were among his admirers. He had equal success in the United States and South America (P.T. Barnum offered him a lucrative contract), but his technique deteriorated; by the time of his death (at age 40) he was struggling to make a living. His sentimental popular pieces were widely played: the Library of Congress has "Last Hope" in 28 editions, including the 1907 Presbyterian hymnal. His compositions based on ethnic styles are much more sophisticated and rhythmically complex, and can be delightful evocations of another era.

Louis Trezevant Wigfall grew up in Edgefield, South Car-

John Shelton Reed's latest book, Kicking Back: Further Dispatches from the South *(University of Missouri Press), is a collection of essays, most of them originally published in* Chronicles. 1001 Things Everyone Should Know about the South *will be published by Doubleday in the spring of 1996.*

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olina, and became active in his state's dangerous politics, killing one man and wounding another in duels. He went bankrupt and moved to Texas, but his fellow Texans sent him back east to Washington as a senator, where he worked to reopen the slave trade and to derail any compromises that might prevent secession (which he ardently desired). He became a Confederate hero by rowing to the besieged Fort Sumter and, without authorization, personally demanding its surrender. He served the Confederacy first as an undistinguished general, then as an obstreperous senator, toward the end declaring that he would prefer to see the Confederacy defeated rather than arm slaves for its service.

Archibald Grimké was the nephew of the South Carolina abolitionist sisters Sarah and Angelina Grimké, the son of their brother Henry, a Charleston lawyer, and his slave Nancy Weston (by whom he had two other children). According to Archibald, his father left Nancy and her sons to his legitimate son Montague, saying they should be "treated as members of the family." Montague turned Nancy out to support herself (not easy, as she was crippled in one arm), but when he married, he took back her children (his half-brothers, in case you've lost track) to be his servants, and had their mother jailed when she protested. After the war patrons sent the boys to Lincoln University. In 1868 Aunt Angelina, living in Boston, saw a mention of Archibald in an antislavery paper and got in touch, establishing a close family relationship. Archibald became a Boston lawyer, editor of the *Hub*, a Negro journal, and a prolific author. In 1894 he became U.S. Consul General to Santo Domingo. He was vice-president of the NAACP and longtime president of the American Negro Academy.

Carry Nation was converted at age ten at a Kentucky camp meeting. Mysticism and bad luck (and possibly a touch of insanity inherited from her mother's family) governed her decisions thenceforth. She married an alcoholic Mason, so she hated both alcohol and fraternal orders. She left him, and when he died six months later, she taught school to support herself, her insane child, and her mother-in-law. In 1877 she contracted another unhappy marriage, to David Nation, and they ended up in Kansas, where Carry became a WCTU activist. She decided (helped by visions) that saloons, being illegal, could simply be destroyed, so she took her trusty hatchet and went to work. After more than 30 arrests, she hired a manager, went on lecture tours (biting the hand that fed her, she denounced Harvard and Yale as "hellholes"), and sold souvenir hatchets (anticipating Lester Maddox). Her husband divorced her for desertion.

Richard Halliburton grew up in Memphis and went to Lawrenceville and Princeton. Crushed that World War I ended before he could get into it, he sailed on a freighter and wandered around Europe before returning to college, where he settled in and edited the *Daily Princetonian*. After that lull he was off again, climbing mountains (the Matterhorn, and Fujiyama in winter—a first), having risky encounters with the law in Gibraltar and Chinese pirates in the East—ideal material for his first book, *The Royal Road to Romance*, a best-seller translated into nine languages. He became the highest paid lecturer of his day and wrote many articles and travel books, perhaps the most important being his two books for children, *Marvels of the Orient* and *Marvels of the Occident*. He disappeared sailing a Chinese junk from Hong Kong to San Francisco. Criticized for his superficial approach to other cultures, he said, "When I stop bubbling it begins to creak."

Dorothy Dix (Elizabeth Gilmer, 1861-1951) was the world's highest paid woman writer in the 1920's. She wrote the first advice-to-women column in America ("Dorothy Dix Speaks") for the New Orleans *Daily Picayune* beginning in 1895. In syndication she offered as many as 60 million readers her ideas about women: "From time immemorial it has been the custom of woman to sacrifice herself whenever she got a chance. . . . On the platform of pure and unadulterated unselfishness she has taken a stand, and defied competition, and now when she wishes to climb down and off, and give other people a chance to practice the virtue they admire so much, she is cruelly misjudged and assailed."

Ralph Peer sold phonographs as a boy in his father's Kansas City store before taking a job with Columbia Records, the first of several recording companies he would work for. His work on Mamie Smith's 1920 "Crazy Blues," an enormous hit with black audiences, persuaded him that he could appeal to other specialized markets by recording "on location." In 1923 in Atlanta he recorded Fiddlin' John Carson's "Little Old Log Cabin in the Lane." Even Peer thought Carson's singing was "pluperfect awful," but the record's great success set off a recording boom in "hill-billy" music, which *Variety* characterized as the "sing-song nasal-twanging vocalizing" of Southern mountaineers with "the intelligence of morons." But there was gold in them there hills, and Peer struck it again in 1927 in Bristol, Tennessee. A call for singers of "prewar melodies and old mountaineer songs" produced a recording session that included both the Carter Family and Jimmie Rodgers. Peer went on to become a major music publisher, as well as a renowned expert on camellias.

Ephraim E. Lisitzky was a major figure in the revival of modern Hebrew. Born in 1885 in Minsk, he came to the United States as a teenager and eventually settled in New Orleans in 1918, where he became principal of the city's excellent Hebrew School. He was a prolific poet, whose best work includes *Medurot Do'akhot* ("Dying Campfires," 1937), an epic in the style and meter of "Hiawatha" based on American Indian legends, and *Be-Oholei Kush* ("In the Tents of Cush," 1953), based on Negro folktales, spirituals, and sermons. Lisitzky's autobiography (originally in Hebrew), was published in English as *In the Grip of Cross-Currents*.

David Marshall Williams of Cumberland County, North Carolina, was in solitary confinement one day (for fighting with his warden while in prison for shooting a sheriff's deputy who was trying to close down one of several whiskey stills he operated) when, naturally, his thoughts turned to the question of how to make a rifle with a short-stroke gas piston. Later, at the start of World War II, the United States government asked the same question, and he was ready with the idea for what became the M1 carbine. No less an authority than Douglas MacArthur credited American victory in the Pacific to "Carbine" Williams' invention.

Duncan Hines was a slow starter (he worked in the printing business until he was 58), but when he found his métier, he built an empire. His 1935 Christmas card was a list of 160 "superior eating places" he had found in his business travels. Word of mouth popularity encouraged him to publish it as *Adventures in Good Eating* in 1936. *Lodging for a Night* followed, then others. By 1948 he was selling 250,000 books a year and his name was a household word signifying quality and integrity. Onward and upward from there, he formed a food company licensing the Duncan Hines label and an institute to publish his

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books. In 1957 Proctor and Gamble bought the whole shebang. When he died, "Recommended by Duncan Hines" signs (leased from his company) adorned 10,000 businesses.

Don't worry: we'll include the South's great writers and musicians, its notorious politicians and gallant soldiers, the famous civil rights leaders and Sunbelt tycoons. But these folks will be in there, too. And anyway it's *a* thousand-and-one things, not *the* thousand-and-one. Make your own list if you don't like ours.

Another set of "things" we're going to include is a list of great movies about the South—or, more precisely, movies about the South that are cinematic achievements, cultural phenomena, and/or good entertainment. Few, if any, have been all three, but we have to say something about *Birth of a Nation* (1915) and *Gone with the Wind* (1939). While we're at it, Paul Muni in *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang* (1932) established the Southern prison brutality movie as a genre, Jean Renoir's *The Southerner* (1945) is highly regarded by cineastes, and Walt Disney's *Song of the South* (1946) made us all whistle "Zip a Dee Doo Dah." Broderick Crawford and Gregory Peck won Oscars for *All the King's Men* (1949) and *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962), respectively. *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1958) gave us the memorable image of Burl Ives as Big Daddy. And so forth.

We're having fun trying to guess which of the recent big-budget "Southerns" will stand the test of time. (*Driving Miss Daisy* maybe; *Fried Green Tomatoes* and *Steel Magnolias*, no way.) And we're also compiling a list of underappreciated Southern films that I may share with you all some other time.

But the most fun has turned out to be picking a selection of *really bad* movies about the South, movies so awful that they deserve to be immortalized for that. We're not talking here about flicks that are just banal and pointless, like many of the later works of Elvis. No, we mean movies that are actively offensive, movies that make you say "I can't believe I'm seeing this!" The South has inspired a great many such films. And they are bad in so many different ways: some are pretentious, some blatantly exploitative, some silly to the point of imbecility, some—well, you'll see. Harry Medved steered us to a few of these with his book *The Fifty Worst Films of All Time*, but some of them we found for ourselves, alas.

Here are our nominees for the worst movies yet about the South. Check 'em out. I think you'll agree that they belong on the short list for the worst about *any* subject. We'll do this David Letterman-style:

10. ***Swamp Women*** (1955) deserves a place on the list, if only for its title. The story of four female convicts who escape from prison and go looking for stolen diamonds hidden in the gator-infested swamps, this is a far cry from Paul Muni. Director Roger Corman got the first Lifetime Achievement Award given by Joe Bob Brigs, former drive-in movie critic of the Dallas *Times-Herald*.

9. ***Hillbillys in a Haunted House*** (1967) tells a story about ghosts and espionage that critic Leonard Maltin accurately describes as "moronic." It stars Ferlin Husky, Merle Haggard, and some other country singers who should have known better. This was also Basil Rathbone's last movie, and it may have killed him. *Las Vegas Hillbillys* (1966), to which this is a sequel, had Jayne Mansfield and Mamie Van Doren instead of Rathbone, but it's not appreciably better.

8. ***Cottonpickin' Chickenpickers*** (1968) is about two guys who rob a Florida chicken farm and are chased at length through the swamps by colorful crackers. In his last movie appearance, Sonny Tufts plays the old swamp drunk. Believe it or not, this is a musical. One of the more memorable songs is "Dirty Ole Egg Suckin' Dog," later recorded by Johnny Cash at Folsom Prison.

7. ***The Last Rebel*** (1971) stars Joe Namath as a former Confederate soldier. What else do you need to know?

6. ***Gator Bait*** (1976) is the story of a swamp-vixen named Desiree, who plays rough. The fatal attraction of the low-down, down-home temptress is a classic theme, but here it's taken to extremes that result in some really gross scenes.

5. ***Southern Comfort*** (1981) shows what happens when some clean-cut National Guardsmen get crossways with Desiree's chinless cousins. Let's just say it makes *Deliverance* look like a day in the park, and speaks eloquently to the need for a Cajun Anti-Defamation League.

4. ***Easy Rider*** (1969) is a period piece, from an unfortunate period, and *National Lampoon* suggested what the Southern take on it should be: two degenerate, dope-peddling, motorcycle-riding hippies (Dennis Hopper and Peter Fonda) and a drunken lawyer (Jack Nicholson) threaten the Southern Way of Life, until they are finally dispatched by armed patriots.

3. ***Mandingo*** (1975) is a trashy sado-historical epic based on Kyle Onstott's trashy novel, starring James Mason as the evil owner of a Louisiana slave-breeding plantation, Susan George as his slutty daughter, Ken North as a hunky black fighter—all stereotypes present and accounted for. This movie and its sequel *Drum* (1976) make the slavery episodes of TV's *Roots* look like an artistic and historical tour de force. It's even worse than *Slaves* (1969), which gets at least a little credit for good intentions.

2. ***Two Thousand Maniacs*** (1964) looks in loving detail at the gruesome deaths and dismemberment of several Northern tourists who innocently stumble on the town of Pleasant Valley, which was wiped out by Union troops but reappears every 100 years looking for revenge. This film, by the director of the infamous *Blood Feast* (1963), is the reductio ad absurdum of the genre (represented by several of our other nominees) based on Yankee fears of the rural South and the creepy folk who live there. Ten years later, in *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, the antics of Leatherface and his housemates insured that viewers would never see Texas barbecue quite the same way, but that movie has some redeeming features, believe it or not. This one doesn't.

Finally (fanfare, please), our candidate for the single worst picture ever made about the American South:

1. ***Hurry Sundown*** (1967) had an ad campaign that asked the question, "Will the South Overcome the Bigotry of the Hate-Laden White Aristocrats?" Set in the 1940's and based on K.B. Gilden's best-selling novel, Otto Preminger's film is about a voracious real estate speculator (Michael Caine, with possibly the worst Southern accent ever recorded) who tries to take the land of two families, one of simple spiritual-singing black folks, the other common white folks of uncommon nobility. A bigoted judge and a lynch mob complete the picture. The kindest word applied to this turkey by the critics was "ludicrous" (Judith Crist), and we suspect it was Walker Percy's model for the ridiculous movie being filmed in *Lancelot*. It makes *Storm Warning* (1951), with Ronald Reagan as an anti-Klan D.A., look profound.

It was a tough choice.

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Legal Insanity

by William J. Quirk

"Knowing that religion does not furnish grosser bigots than law, I expect little from old judges."

—Thomas Jefferson

Igor Kopelnitsky

Judicial Power and American Character
by Robert F. Nagel
New York: Oxford University Press; 188 pp., $29.95

◆

A society governed by the judiciary—rather than by the will of the majority—displays odd characteristics. On July 29, 1994, a seven-year-old girl in Hamilton Township, New Jersey, was sexually assaulted and murdered. A neighbor who is a twice-convicted sex offender has been charged in her death. In response to this crime, the state enacted legislation requiring that a community be notified when sex offenders are released into it. In 1984, Carlos Diaz pleaded guilty to raping a 20-year-old Garfield, New Jersey, woman in Teterboro. Two days after Mr. Diaz's release from prison, Federal Judge John W. Bissell exempted him from "Megan's Law." The judge found that the law could have a "punitive impact" on Mr. Diaz. Judge Bissell said he was sympathetic with the legislature's intentions, but added that the Constitution "has stood for centuries as a reservoir for individual rights." He found, as the *New York Times* reported, that "the harm Mr. Diaz would face through the notification provisions was greater than the threat the community faced by not invoking them."

On October 7, 1994, a Federal District Judge in Colorado ruled that an inmate serving a ten-year sentence for kidnapping must be allowed to perform satanic rituals in his cell. Satanism, the judge ruled, was protected under the First Amendment; a prison rule barring devil worship was unconstitutional. We ought to give the devil his due, said the judge.

Midshipman Joseph Steffan was dismissed from the Naval Academy in 1987 after he stated he was a homosexual, a violation of Defense Department regulations. Chief Judge Abner J. Mikva of the District of Columbia Circuit Court of Appeals conceded that the military could prohibit homosexual conduct, but found that it is "inherently unreasonable" to presume that a person is more likely to break a rule simply because of intention or desire. The military's finding that the presence of homosexuals harms morale and discipline was set aside by the court because it "depends solely upon the prejudice of third parties." The court's opinion also rejected the military's argument that the presence of homosexuals invades the privacy of heterosexual servicemen: "The argument that homosexuals will stare is very similar to the argument that they will engage in homosexual acts. . . . The argument that heterosexuals will fear such staring is, in turn, a version of the argument that government should be allowed to give effect to the irrational fears and stereotypes of third parties."

Most Americans would regard these decisions as insane. Learned Hand once asked who had made the judiciary "the arbiters of all political authority in the nation with a discretion to act or not as they please?" Hand's is a good question, to which Robert F. Nagel, a professor at the University of Colorado School of Law, has given us a thoughtful answer. Nagel, in his 1989 book *Constitutional Cultures*, concludes: The "Constitution has become an ambitious political and

William J. Quirk is coauthor, with Randall Bridwell, of Judicial Dictatorship, *recently released by Transaction Publishers.*

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social agenda; the courts have become a kind of elevated bureaucracy, busily crafting formulae that will bend the nation's affairs toward various visions, dignified by constitutional status."

The "various visions" come from what Paul Hollander calls the "adversarial culture," an intellectual elite which believes the "prevailing social order is deeply flawed, unjust, corrupt and irrational, calculated to constrain or reduce human satisfactions." The Court styles itself as the protector of individual rights and self-expression against the will of the oppressive bourgeois majority. Crime, on this understanding, is a form of self-expression, as well as of social protest. The Court routinely overrules the actions of local police, boards of education, and the state laws under which they act. It calls the deleted laws "arbitrary" or "without rational basis"—extravagant language which, as Professor Nagel notes, shows no respect for the acts of popular assemblies. The Court, he writes, has "isolate[d] itself from the general culture, retaining ties of language and intellectual approach only to an academic elite."

Why are so many members of this intellectual elite convinced that their society is unjust and immoral? Certainly, they are not themselves victims of the injustices to which they are so sensitive. Indeed, American society has provided them with a comfortable, and often tenured, position. Nagel speculates that the alienation of the judicial elite has a particular history:

> The single most significant event for present-day judges and scholars was the federal judiciary's extended and often heroic assault on racial segregation in the South. The profound formative influence of this struggle has shaped as has nothing else law, role, and aspiration. The operative image has been of the courts attacking a pernicious and deeply ingrained part of popular culture. By degrees, I believe, this image of the judiciary as antagonist to the popular culture has consolidated and grown, so that the courts' basic function has become that of critic and reformer of the general culture. No more than the arrogant modern painter or composer, whose roles also are to uplift an unappreciative and uncomprehending mass sensibility, need the judiciary employ an idiom that draws on and is understandable to ordinary people.

The courts are the leading participants in the debate over homosexuality, which has locked American society in a "ferocious struggle over defining the morality of sexual behavior, the meaning of psychological health and the function of family life." While the rhetoric on both sides is often extravagant, the dispute is about real and irreconcilable differences on matters that are crucial to individuals, families, and society. Nagel writes: "A gathering consensus in respectable circles holds not only that courts should resolve the important disputes about public policy on homosexuality, but that they can do so in a way that does not require anyone to answer the underlying moral questions." The answers to the questions, says Nagel, are "far beyond the competence of any court."

Nagel focuses on the Court's use of stilted academic language and the formulaic style of its opinions. For example, in *United States* v. *O'Brien* (1968), in which it upheld the conviction of O'Brien for burning his draft card, the Court reformulated the simple language of the First Amendment to read:

> This Court has held that when "speech" and "nonspeech" elements are combined in the same course of conduct, a sufficiently important governmental interest in regulating the nonspeech element can justify incidental limitations on First Amendment freedoms. To characterize the quality of the governmental interest which must appear, the Court has employed a variety of descriptive terms: compelling; substantial; subordinating; paramount; cogent; strong. Whatever imprecision inheres in these terms, we think it clear that a government regulation is sufficiently justified if it is within the constitutional power of the Government; if it furthers an important or substantial governmental interest; if the governmental interest is unrelated to the suppression of free expression; and if the incidental restriction on alleged First Amendment freedoms is no greater than is essential to the furtherance of that interest.

Would the people ever have adopted this mishmash as a Constitutional amendment? The Court's formulae lead to bizarre and unexplainable results: protection for the burning of flags, but not for the burning of draft registration cards; protection for yard signs, obscenity, and nude dancing, but not for Frank Snepps's book critical of the precipitous American withdrawal from the Saigon Embassy roof, in which the records of many who had assisted the United States were left behind. If those decisions can be reconciled, then, to use Jefferson's words, "I surrender human reason as a vain and useless faculty, given to bewilder, and not to guide us." The Court's program, as Nagel writes, "has done great damage to the public understanding and appreciation of the principle of free speech by making it seem trivial, foreign, and unnecessarily costly."

Nagel explains how the Court's use of terrible English reflects and is designed to obscure the collapse of clear analysis. Its language is not intended to convey thought, but to accomplish a political purpose. The Court's use of complicated formulae is meant to render the "judiciary's adversarial relationship with the general culture" more acceptable by making its decisions appear technical and objective:

> The style is a conscientious effort to maintain intellectual respectability while attempting to formulate and implement complex policies through institutional layers and across time. The "constitution" has become an ambitious political and social agenda; the courts have become a kind of elevated bureaucracy, busily crafting formulae that will bend the nation's affairs toward various visions dignified by constitutional status.

In *Wallace* v. *Jaffree* (1984), the Court overturned an Alabama law calling for a moment of silence in the schools. The Court conceded that it was constitutional for students to have prayerful thoughts in school, since to hold otherwise would violate several freedoms. But, nonetheless, the Court threw the law out because a legislator had expressed an improper motivation in saying that he wanted to return prayer to public schools, and the moment of silence was the first step toward that end. The Court claimed to be standing athwart the bridge to protect

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the country from the barbarians: "Those who begin coercive elimination of dissent soon find themselves exterminating dissenters." Similarly, the Court believed it was saving us from totalitarianism when it overturned Texas's anti-flag-burning statute in *Texas* v. *Johnson*. This time, it offered a countervision: "The way to preserve the flag's special role is not to punish those who feel differently. It is to persuade them that they are wrong." There is, the Court continued, "no better way to counter a flag burner's message than by saluting the flag that burns." Does the country need nine Platonic Guardians to save us from totalitarianism? Is it plausible that nine Guardians *can* save us from totalitarianism? Indeed, is it possible that the nine Guardians *are* the problem rather than the solution?

In his current book, as in his past writings, Nagel provides the best analysis yet of the Court's method, and of the relation of its style to its purposes. The Court's opinions are written in a way that "masks significant considerations." They "indicate a direction and a sense of urgency without revealing any animating vision or underlying judgment." The stream of words is "insistent but fundamentally ineffective, baffling." But the Court's vision is shared by mainstream scholars like Lawrence Tribe and Ronald Dworkin. As Nagel writes:

> The society that Justice Brennan would create is thought by many to be not only morally attractive but legally imperative. In that imagined society, virtually all acts expressing defiance are protected as "speech"; people revel in, hide from, or are inured to the clamor of offensive communications and sexually explicit materials; church and state are separated by a high and (mostly) impregnable wall; gender differentiation has been eliminated; abortion is freely available; sexual freedoms have been extended to minors and to the unmarried; the institution of marriage has withered into legal insignificance; and death itself is a liberty protected by the Constitution. For many judges and legal academics, this world, or something like it, marks the limit of imagination and tolerance. In this there is a dogmatism that the law dignifies and obscures.

The Court has expressed mystical beliefs about its relation to the people. It believes it must have the power it does because of "our sense of ourselves as a people"—a view boldly stated in the 1992 decision *Planned Parenthood* v. *Casey*, where, speaking of the American people, the Court said: "Their belief in themselves as such a people is not readily separable from their understanding of the Court invested with the authority to speak before all others." Speaking before all others is a heavy responsibility, and it is hard to see when and where the people imposed that burden on the Court.

Nagel is one of few commentators to note that Robert Bork and his critics are more alike than they are different. Both agree with judicial review as established by John Marshall in *Marbury* v. *Madison*. Both believe judicial review is and should be "an essentially intellectual activity superimposed over majoritarian politics." It is true that a judge like Bork will interfere with the majority less than will William Brennan, but who knows when or where? Senator Biden asked Bork one "admirably blunt" question: "Does the majority have the right to tell a couple that they cannot use birth control?" Bork's answer was evasive and intellectualized. A similar issue was at stake in the Scopes trial, and drew this comment from Learned Hand: "Somebody must determine the curriculum, who shall it be? The judges [or the State of Tennessee]?" The people, Hand believed, have the right to decide controversial issues themselves. They will make mistakes but, as Jefferson wrote to Lafayette: "The good sense of our people will direct the boat ultimately to its proper point."

The country's long acquiescence in the peculiar institution of judicial review is puzzling. Judicial review assumes that the President and Congress, the branches responsible to the people, either cannot understand—or will not respect—the Constitution, and that the Supreme Court does understand it and will respect it. Its philosophical assumptions are so inconsistent with democratic theory that a long tradition of legal thought has resisted it. Jefferson believed judicial review to be a very dangerous assumption of power by the Court, which "would place us under the despotism of an oligarchy." Jefferson, Madison, Jackson, Lincoln, and both Roosevelts all opposed it.

For many years, judicial self-restraint allowed judicial review, while fundamentally inconsistent with majority rule, to coexist with it. For the past 30 years, however, the Supreme Court has used judicial review unrestrainedly to impose basic social and economic policies upon an unwilling majority. Nagel believes our long acquiescence in the practice is because, in some sense, we want judicial rule: an anxious society will put its trust in the courts although its resort to them only reinforces its weakness. Our dependence on the judiciary is based on "a disturbing sense of distrust in ourselves and a fear of disintegration." This depressing conclusion perhaps reads too much into public acquiescence to judicial review.

The same judicial arrogance that Mr. Nagel has documented so well may ultimately, however, cause the downfall of judicial rule, since the willingness of the judiciary since 1965 to oppose the wishes of the majority has placed the courts squarely in the role of adversary to the people. The consequent loss of popular respect for the judicial system only heightens the likelihood that the majority will eventually reassert its rightful authority.

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An Odd, New Way To Rome

All roads lead to Rome. There's Augustine Avenue and the immense Aquinas Turnpike. More broad highways were built by St. Benedict, St. Dominic, and St. Francis. I stumbled onto a tiny, twisting trail.

When I became a Christian, I decided to believe the Bible, literally. Then, I joined the Mainline church to which generations of my family belonged. Their leadership became leaders hip; liberal and pro-abortion. I saw two choices: Become a Baptist, where being a Fundamentalist wasn't thought to be odd. Or, become a Catholic, where Fundamentalism was laughed at, but whose structure was sounder.

The notion of being a Catholic Fundamentalist offended everyone. Many modern Catholics enjoy feeling intellectually superior to Fundamentalists and won't take them seriously. Many Fundamentalists won't admit that the Catholic Church is primary in Christendom.

I was astride the Great Divide. Then, it hit me: We have Free Will! Therefore, when God made the world, He had to do it so that we couldn't tell if He made it. Why? If we could prove that He made it, we'd be forced to believe in Him, and wouldn't have Free Will.

All I had to figure out was how He could have made a world with fossils and layers of rock and all the old-looking stuff. I ran across a book on fractals, the shapes drawn by computer formulas that make surprisingly realistic forms. "God could have programmed 3-D fractals!" zoomed into my mind. "With 3-D fractals, He could program a world with beds of fossils, dinosaur bones, pools of oil; everything on and in the Earth, in 7 days. 3-Dimensional fractals, smaller than electrons, could be the building blocks of building blocks!" No one could prove they aren't.

I don't like weird thoughts. I'm a conservative family man... prosperous... own a factory.... hundreds of employees .... farms.... knack for inventing things.... dozens of patents.... on Boards of Directors.... an elected official .... Republican. The last person in the world who should be spending time trying to clear underbrush from a strange trail to Rome is me. Usually, it's some Pinko nun.

I couldn't stop. I turned my pathway to Rome into a novel, *CRATS!*. Advertised it in a few conservative magazines. Ads, and word of mouth, generate sales from Ecuador to Japan in a growing underground of Catholic fundamentalism.

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What Cause Was Lost?

by Brenan R. Nierman

A Government of Our Own: The Making of the Confederacy
by William C. Davis
New York: The Free Press; 550 pp., $27.95

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The War for Southern Independence reminds us of many things, not least of which that there were once many men who were willing to take up arms to defend what they believed to be their birthright as Americans. It was not by chance that the Great Seal of the new nation featured George Washington, for the Confederates saw themselves as following the road that the great Southerner had trod in leading the secession from England.

As Jefferson Davis said, "When the cause was lost, what cause was it?" It was, he went on, not "of the South only, but the cause of constitutional government, of the supremacy of law, of the natural rights of man." The war to subjugate the South was "on the part of the United States Government, one of aggression and usurpation, and, on the part of the South, was for the defense of an inherent, unalienable right." Looked at another way, the War for Southern Independence gave us the Gilded Age of plutocratic plunder and created the dynamics for the multicultural muddle that is already driving America into open ethnic conflict. Southerners realized where things were headed when an ambitious prairie lawyer was elected the 16th President of the United States.

Thomas R.R. Cobb recognized Lincoln's election for what it was: the triumph of the first avowedly sectional party in the Union's history, a party that did not shun—indeed, that welcomed—the support of the zealots who fueled John Brown's rage with financial and moral support. "These people hate us," he told his wife. The reason was simple: "They are a *different* people from us, whether better or worse and *there is no love between us*." Cobb recognized that two different cultures would be best off as separate entities. He then proceeded to help create a new nation.

William C. Davis's book is a detailed chronicle of how this new nation came to be, from the tocsin of Lincoln's election to the Confederate government's transfer from Montgomery to Richmond in May 1961. Like Davis's biography of Jefferson Davis, it does not give the Southern cause the benefit of the doubt on issues of historical controversy (such as the place of slavery as a feature of Southern nationalism). But it does fix the men assembled in convention at Montgomery in the role that they understood themselves as playing: heirs of the Framers of the original Constitution, and heirs to the legacy of 1776. As the Reverend Basil Manley prayed, in the opening prayer of the convention of the seceded states, "Oh, thou heart-searching God, we trust that Thou sees we are pursuing those rights which were guaranteed to us by the solemn covenants of our fathers, and which were cemented by their blood." Davis is quite clear in his interpretation that this is a conservative revolution; indeed, as he points out, Manley's voice was the first of many to strike this theme.

The enterprise, then, was more of a restoration than a revolution; and nothing highlights this truth more than the use of the old federal Constitution as the framework for the Confederate Constitution. Davis's treatment of this part of the story is solid, and reaffirms from the perspective of anecdote the point that Marshall DeRosa has made so well in his definitive work on the subject, *The Confederate Constitution of 1861*: that the Confederacy was an effort to maintain the liberty which flourished under the old Republic.

One facet of the historical record that constantly surprises is the difficulty pro-secessionists had in convincing the mass of people that a long train of abuses had necessitated the final step. This suggests that, for all the great sacrifices endured by the men and women who stood by her, the South was not as united on a single course of action as might be expected. That lack of unity bode ill for such a desperate bid for liberty.

It has been likewise throughout Southern history, and in ever-increasing measure in the present age. This is one reason why any contemporary talk of Southern secession is naive and premature at best. If Southerners were unwilling to close their public schools for good in the wake of *Brown* v. *Board of Education* in 1954, there can be little doubt that today, when issues of much greater importance generate far less emotion and threaten what is left of their native culture, they will meekly obey the powers-that-be rather than show some spunk. Which merely confirms an old prediction.

The cause of the South will never again take quite the same form that it took in 1860. The Southern Agrarians' prediction that the Industrial Revolution would eviscerate the particular regional identity of the South has come all too true, and any future effort to revive the political philosophy of regional particularity and decentralized government must take into account the economic ties that strap these states into the network of a larger, ever more despotic federal union. It may well be years before any sense of regional, ethnic, and cultural identity causes Americans to rebel against their fate beneath the wheel of a government that panders to Wall Street and to the managerial elite that profits from plutocracy. It may well be years before disgust at the sight of self-appointed leaders groveling at the feet of ever-unsatisfied special interests causes Middle America to determine that the time has come to show these charlatans the door. Eventually, the contradiction of impoverishment in a land of plenty, and the consistent war upon traditional values in a culture that is disintegrating precisely because those values have been undermined, will become too glaring to ignore. It is then that the cause of the South will be seen as the cause of Western civilization.

Brenan R. Nierman has taught government at George Mason University and Mount Vernon College.

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How Do You Spell 'Individualism'?

by William J. Watkins, Jr.

The Myth of American Individualism: The Protestant Origins of American Political Thought
by Barry Alan Shain
Princeton: Princeton University Press; 394 pp., $39.50

◆

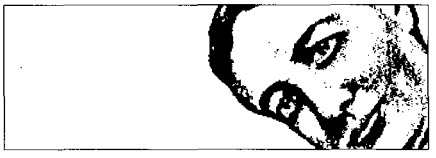
A popular belief about the founding era is that America was a society of atomistic individuals. All that Americans demanded, according to myth, was that their life and property be protected by government: the remainder of their affairs was to be their own concern. Barry Alan Shain, in his new book *The Myth of American Individualism: The Protestant Origins of American Political Thought*, systematically debunks this libertarian fiction by appealing to primary sources, such as sermons and political tracts, to which most Americans were regularly exposed.

Rather than focusing on the commonly held ideas and beliefs of the elite, Shain examines those of ordinary Americans. The key to understanding the attitudes of the common man, and the nexus of the book itself, is reformed Protestantism. In Shain's view, Calvin rather than Locke shaped the colonists' thought as they contemplated separation from Great Britain. Certainly the Founders were influenced by the likes of Algernon Sidney and Montesquieu, but the farmer and craftsman had little or no knowledge of their works. The common people knew their Bibles, Hymnals, and Almanacs. Theirs was a world in which original sin kept man from the possibility of enjoying absolute liberty.

Thus ordinary citizens expected their neighbors and local governments to be involved in their lives as they sought to do their paramount duty: service to God. Shain concludes that they believed that "God was best served by a community of believers mutually and reciprocally ensuring that they chose his ways over the siren calls of the flesh." In light of this reformed Protestant belief, early America could have been nothing but localist and communalist.

If this is the case, how did the myth of American individualism develop? Shain postulates that at the heart of the misunderstanding lies language. What 17th- and 18th-century Americans meant when they spoke of liberty is entirely different from the modern understanding of the word. Whereas liberty is now defined as the freedom to do as one pleases, our ancestors saw liberty as the freedom to "do all the Good we can in our Places, to serve GOD and our Generation." Unless one understands this, it is easy to interpret their words in a libertarian sense.

Shain also blames two of America's most prolific foreign guests—Tocqueville and Michael Chevalier—for much of the confusion. Tocqueville described individualism as the tendency of the American "to sever himself from the mass of his fellows and draw apart with his family and friends." Shain correctly observes that Tocqueville was describing localism, or familialism, rather than individualism, and notes that "individualism" was not in the English language until translations of Chevalier and Tocqueville's works appeared. Had something akin to modern individualism existed in America, there no doubt would have been a word to describe it before the 1840's.



The fact that America was essentially communal does not, however, mean that Americans were not leery of centralized power. Though Americans of the founding generation expected their local governments and neighbors to have a say in their affairs, the national government was given no such power. Shain sees American federalism as evidence of the preponderance of localism. Under the Constitution, the national government was simply to provide for defense and secure free commerce among the several states. The states and local governments retained their police powers to regulate the health, welfare, and morals of the citizenry.

Shain's study of America's communal past is a fascinating work that does much to expose the hollowness of early American individualism.

William J. Watkins, Jr., is assistant editor of The Freeman.

Learned Liars

by Arnold Beichman

The Dream That Failed: Reflections on the Soviet Union
by Walter Laqueur
New York: Oxford University Press; 231 pp., $25.00

◆

Let us at the outset dispose of one of the major criticisms of Sovietology and Sovietologists: their failure to predict the end of Soviet communism and the collapse of the Soviet Empire. It is one of the strange curiosities of Soviet history that the communist leaders could not predict events in their own backyard, either. Marxism-Leninism so blinded these virtuosi of revolution and masters of the "laws" of history to the reality around them that they did nothing to protect themselves or even, in the end, to conserve the Leninist system. Despite a network of informers and a cowed population, despite a powerful secret police possessing the most advanced surveillance technology, and despite the absence of the rule of law, neither Lenin nor Trotsky predicted the rise of Stalin to supreme power. Stalin, who wanted Malenkov as his successor, was unable to foresee the rise of Khrushchev; Lavrenti Beria, the head of the secret police, never expected his execution in 1953 at the hands of his fellow Politburocrats; Khrushchev, in turn, did not foretell his own dethronement in 1964 and the rise of Brezhnev; Brezhnev and *his* Politburocrats were astonished by the outcome of their war against Afghanistan; the Soviet Politburo failed to grasp the consequences for communist rule if Gorbachev were elected to the top position; the unsuccessful putschists who tried to overthrow Gorbachev in 1991 did not expect to fail; and, finally, Gorbachev himself had no inkling that, five years after assuming office, he would be presiding over the liquidation of the Soviet Empire, and that he would also be out of a job. If these leaders, the original Soviet experts with their own interests at

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stake, proved such bad prophets, why then blame a bunch of academics, armed with nothing more dangerous than their software, for their failure to predict the overnight collapse of the Soviet Union?

The real issue, of course, is not the failure of these scholars to predict the course of Soviet history. It is rather, says Walter Laqueur, that they—mainstream Sovietologists, like Beatrice and Sidney Webb in England and Jerry Hough, Arch Getty, Seweryn Bialer, and many others in the United States—bent historical truth, ignored the meaning of Stalinism, and idealized a monstrous, inhuman despotism. For them, willing participants of "groupthink," collectivization was a success, the Great Terror justifiable and, therefore, a minor blip on the road to paradise. A critical attitude toward Stalinism and its concentration camp universe was regarded as Cold War propaganda that need not be refuted. These Sovietologists echoed Molotov, who said in his memoirs, "Our mistakes, including the crude mistakes, were justified." These academics structured what Robert Conquest has called "a professional investment in fallacy" as part of the "Stalinophile tradition."

Truly, it was the era of *furor Sovieticus* when highly placed academics told fictions which, as instant experts, they sold on television and op-ed pages; e.g., the Soviet Union had become a pluralist society, a democracy of a different type, with a crude but sturdy parliamentary system. Those scholars who disagreed with such outrageous "scholarship" did not, with a few exceptions, last long in academia; they were rarely hired, and even more rarely were they granted tenure. When Sovietologists uttered their soothing assurances that the Soviet Union was nothing to worry about, that the Cold War, instigated by President Truman, was an immoral McCarthyite exploitation of democratic opinion by the American military-industrial complex, they helped strengthen a dictatorship as foul as Hitler's.

Take Professor Hough, an ornament of the Brookings Institution. In the late 70's, he was asked by Harvard's Russian center to update the famed and widely used textbook written by the late Professor Merle Fainsod, *How Russia is Ruled*. When the revision appeared in 1979, the title had become *How the Soviet Union is Governed*, a nuanced shift of emphasis. In the index of the original book, Professor Fainsod had included some 60 citations relating to forced labor camps; in Hough's "revised" version, there were none. And there were worse changes. Had such an act of intellectual corruption been committed by someone on the right, the academy would have anathematized its perpetrator. But Hough leads a charmed life.

Laqueur describes an appearance by Hough before a congressional committee, during which Hough told the committee members that the Soviet Union was solving its political problems—which had anyway been grossly exaggerated—with amazing speed, and that modern countries did not break up. Gorbachev, he said, was secure. A few weeks later there was no Soviet Union, and Gorbachev was gone. (Columbia's Professor Bialer predicted in 1983 that "the Soviet Union may face a leadership crisis and an economic crisis, but it does not now and in all probability will not in the next decade face a systemic crisis that endangers its existence.") More outrageous still was the downplaying by Hough, Getty, and other mainstream Sovietologists of the extent of the purges and mass killings under Stalin. (Had any professor at any university dared to minimize the Holocaust or apartheid in South Africa before Mandela's presidency, or to offer kind words for Generalissimo Franco, how long would he have lasted at his job?) Whitewashing the Great Terror was no ordinary academic achievement. Professors like Getty and Hough ignored the evidence and documentation of Solzhenitsyn, Mandelstam, Babel, Tsvetayeva, Orlov, Krivitsky—the list is endless—and thus ended up as apologists for the Soviet regime. Yet, in 1987, Nikolai Shemelev, a member of the Soviet parliament and a senior staff member of the prestigious Institute of USA and Canada, reported that at least 17 million Soviet citizens had been sent to labor camps as political prisoners between 1937 and Stalin's death in 1953. And another five million peasants during the late 1920's and early 30's were deported thousands of miles from their homes to wastelands during the forced collectivization of Soviet agriculture.

Laqueur has done a magnificent job in documenting a scandal in the American social sciences, and in analyzing the reasons for that scandal. But the Houghs and Gettys are impenitent. They will not utter even a word of apology to that small handful of Sovietologists who were right: Laqueur, Conquest, Brzezinski, Malia. But Hough, Getty, and company cannot wipe away what they said: they cannot rewrite their past as scholars. The collapse of communist theory and power, a cataclysmic event which contradicted virtually everything they had published, has been insufficient to impel them "to express regret for their failure to speak up for truth in the past," to quote Wilcomb E. Washburn, an investigator into the intellectual derelictions of highly regarded historians.

Why should one care about the dishonesty of quasi-scholars? Because, as Lionel Trilling has written, "This is the great vice of academicism, that it is concerned with ideas rather than with thinking and nowadays the errors of academicism do not stay in the academy; they make their way into the world and what begins as a failure of perception among intellectual specialists finds its fulfillment in policy and action."

Arnold Beichman, a research fellow at the Hoover Institution, is the author of Anti-American Myths: Their Causes and Consequences.

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Stainless Steel

by J.O. Tate

The Hogan Mystique
Edited by Ian Martin Davis
Greenwich: The American Golfer;
132 pp., $50.00

◆

This book seems to be a coffee-table job for golfers, and no doubt there are many who will enjoy it that way. Some may even fancy that they will learn something about golf from it, but I think that something will be limited. No, this openly closed book reveals nothing that was not for years hidden in plain sight; it tells nothing that was not known and is not told and retold. Yet it is immensely valuable for living up to its title with

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literal truth and graphic clarity. In image after image, it demonstrates the mystique of a man who happened to play golf and who—though he has not appeared in competition for a quarter of a century—is still spoken of in hushed tones, no longer as "The Hawk," as he used to be called, but as "Mr. Hogan."

Jules Alexander's photographs of Ben Hogan in action at the U.S. Open at Winged Foot in 1959, and at Westchester in 1970 and elsewhere, are the heart of this book, and they are the finest of their kind that I have ever seen. Alexander's old Nikon, in these black and whites, drinks in every texture of grass and leaves, of cotton and wool, and shows something about an America that is already past. The photographs are of museum quality, and some of them even look posed. One particularly resembles either the first stage of an oil painting before the hues are worked up, or else a retro advertisement for Ralph Lauren. Indeed, an analysis of the Hogan wardrobe would say much about the relation of fashion, taste, style, and the value of a dollar. We have, in the backgrounds of trees and people, something of the old America before it lost its integrity completely.

These photographs show a Hogan who was past his peak but still master of the game—and of himself. They don't show the skinny kid who turned pro at 19 and hooked the ball wildly. They don't show the young man who couldn't make it on the tour while his peers, Byron Nelson and Sam Snead, bloomed early and often. What they show are the physical and moral results of Hogan's struggles to master himself so he could master the game. More or less inventing practice, Hogan went at golf with such passion and precision that people still talk about "Hogan's secret." But Hogan declared that "The secret is in the dirt." He found perfection by beating balls—and people came to watch. After Lee Trevino watched Hogan practice at Shady Oaks in the early 60's, he changed his game accordingly and went from nowhere to global success.

Like Trevino and Palmer, Hogan had built his game to beat a hook. It is just at this point, I believe, that Hogan leaves civilians behind, for most people who pick up a golf club need to develop a hook, not prevent one. Even if that were not so, there are few if any players who have as strong a right hand as Hogan, or his blacksmith's arms, which he came by naturally as well as by training—his father *was* a blacksmith. Henry Picard was the one who "weakened" Hogan's left-hand position, so that he could lash the ball with his right without hooking, but only someone of Hogan's strength and speed would have needed that. Hogan's famous pronation, his "fanning" of the blade, and low but extended position at the top, were all perfect for him, but not models for human beings.

On the other hand, these photographs demonstrate a certain perfection of form that *is* a model, even a Platonic ideal, and not only for golf. No one ever stayed behind the ball or finished in balance as well as Ben Hogan, but what he did, and what these photographs show, transcends the sport even as he transcended it during his peak years of competition. He was the dominant player on tour from 1940 until 1949, losing some years to World War II and another one to a head-on Greyhound bus in a Texas fog. Broken bones, major surgery, and hobbled legs pulled Hogan off the tour, and strangely transformed him by simplifying his aims even further. Focusing on major championships and competing only with the ideal, he raised even his game another notch as he withdrew still further into himself. The result was his record at the U.S. Open and at the British Open in his only entry, and the establishment of that mystique which these photographs dramatically convey.

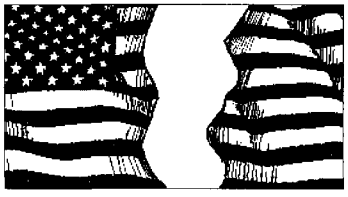
Martin Davis's book, fortified by essays by Dave Anderson, Ben Crenshaw, and Dan Jenkins, as well as by commentary on the photographs by Ken Venturi, fully succeeds in presenting the charisma of Hogan in a stunning way. We must be reminded that the word "legend" means first the life of a saint, and that the word "mystique," related to "mystic," is derived from the Greek for "one initiated into the mysteries" and "to shut the eyes." We should not be surprised, therefore, to behold a photograph of Hogan on the tee, alone amidst the staring crowd, standing with his eyes shut.

Hogan's mystique lives on whenever golfers congregate, and many of them hope to steal a bit of that mystery whenever they reach in the bag for one of those Hogan Apex irons—the ones that say "Ft. Worth—TX" on the hosel, forged in steel—or for one of those Series 56 drivers or Special Sure-Out II sand wedges. They are not reaching for a brand name so much as for an assurance of complete simplicity and integrity of craftsmanship. Hogan always gave that, and he still does.

But perhaps there has been one celebration of Hogan's mystique even finer than the cult of his clubs or this collection of authoritative pictures and words, and that was in Michael Murphy's novel *Golf in the Kingdom* (1972). In that book, the mystical golf pro Shivas Irons reveals to the narrator the "true zodiac": "As I looked at the sky I saw an outline of Ben Hogan's Indian profile appear amidst the other constellations. It was the only one I could recognize besides the Big Dipper." Knowledge of the true zodiac, possession of Hogan clubs, and acquisition of *The Hogan Mystique* are necessary not only for the golf-obsessed, but for all seekers after ultimate reality.

J.O. Tate is a professor of English at Dowling College on Long Island.

LIBERAL ARTS



FEDERAL FUNDING

Jane Alexander, Bill Clinton's head of the National Endowment for the Arts, expressed Deep Thoughts on politics in an interview with *Parade* magazine:

"There are a lot of things the government supports that one or another group doesn't like. Some city people don't know why they should be taxed to subsidize wheat farmers when they don't live in a rural state. Why should childless people be taxed for public schools? Why should nonmotorists be taxed for highways, or middle-class people to pay for health care for the poor? Or people be taxed to support the arts? Because it is in the good of the whole nation. . . . So there!"

In case you object, that also goes for her government salary of $123,100.

—Jeffrey Tucker

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Letter From Bosnia

by Yorgos Filiopoulos

Interview With the Vice President of the Bosnian Serbs

Dr. Nikola Koljevic, vice president of the Bosnian Serbs

The following is an interview I conducted earlier this year with Dr. Nikola Koljevic, a well-known Shakespearean scholar and the current Vice President of the Bosnian Serbs. Dr. Koljevic has been a professor at the University of Sarajevo, Stanford, and the University of Michigan. In 1990, he was elected to the Bosnian parliament (one of the two Serbian representatives), and since 1992 has been the vice president of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia. The interview took place in Pale, Bosnia (an area controlled by the Bosnian Serbs).

Q: What is your opinion about the coverage of the war by the Western media?

A: Everybody knows that the coverage, in terms of quantity, is amazing. It is so large that one naturally asks the question "Why?" Why has Bosnia's crisis been on the front pages of European and, especially, American newspapers like the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* for the past three years? Second, it was obvious from the beginning that the coverage was biased against the Serbs. It's been so biased that Peter Brock wrote in *Strategic Policy and Defense* that the range of false reporting and prejudice spans from the simple, like a picture of a Serbian woman presented as a Croat, to the sophisticated, such as failing to point out that Serbs in Bosnia had not just come from Serbia but have lived here for centuries. This is how they succeed in presenting the Serbs as aggressors. It is much easier for the general public to swallow the idea that the Serbs were the aggressors if they thought that the Serbs had just invaded Bosnia from the other side of the river Drina. So, we can see that just by the lack of simple information you can build a negative image.

Q: So, you think this was an organized media campaign?

A: Yes, I think that it was a very visible campaign against the Serbs. First of all, it is quite obvious that public relations and image making—that's an American specialty, something that Americans are much more skillful at than Europeans—played a very important role. The campaign was designed on the emotional basis of what really touches the people. They first presented us as the enemies. They then hid the fact that the war did not start in Sarajevo but in Kuprec and Bosadina, where the first massacre of the Serbs occurred in the river Sava. So, if you combine the notion that the Serbs began the war with the notion that the Serbs are the aggressors, you have started on the road toward making Serbs into the bad guys in a simple, moralistic division—the bad guys versus the good guys—a simplistic division especially attractive to Americans.

The next step of this campaign was to make up stories about the so-called concentration camps. Yes, we have prisoner camps, as do the Croats and the Muslims. In fact, in the early days of the war, when there was great pressure on us, we unilaterally released 6,000 prisoners, as a gesture of good will, which backfired on us militarily because many of these people reappeared to face us again on the battlefield.

The third stage was the story about "ethnic cleansing." What the press ignored is that many civilians, Serbs and Muslims, just did not want to fight and therefore left the area, as happens in any war. And those who left were treated well. However, "ethnic cleansing" was a very emotional symbol because it showed that people could not live where they want, which is a basic human freedom. What is interesting about the ethnic cleansing accusations is that the American press did not mention the number of Serbian refugees—and there were more Serbian refugees in Yugoslavia than Muslim refugees in Europe. More interesting still is that Serbs in Sarajevo did not have freedom of movement. The 50,000 Serbs in Sarajevo, 29,000 Serbs in Zenica, and 25,000 in Tuzla were ethnic hostages. They were not able to leave these places. And if you compare the situation of someone who is not free to relocate—this was the situation of my brother, who could not leave Sarajevo for eight months—with the situation of a refugee, as I was during World War II, the latter is easier. I do not mean that it is good or desirable, but it is easier than being an ethnic hostage. You can go where you want, you can get humanitarian aid, you can leave the battlefield. However, we have not seen any coverage of the Serbian hostages, which is propaganda in the sense that the other side is not shown.

The fourth stage was the rape accusations. Media and p.r. firms well know human psychology and the emotional triggers of the average, middle-class American, who is more sensitive to rape because of the power of the women's rights movement. The media circulated figures given to them by the Muslims,

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but they did not take into consideration the official Red Cross, U.N., and Amnesty International figures.

The final stage concerned the ill and the young, how they had been denied medical help and had to be transported by air to European and American hospitals. Of course, the press would not show any wounded Serbian children, as if they did not exist.

So, all of this contributes to the idea that one side is good and the other is bad. And the really grotesque thing is that when the Muslims realized the power of these images, they started to victimize themselves, as in the staged massacre of Markala. David Bynder, an American journalist, had to wait four months to publish an article about this staged massacre.

Q: So you believe p.r. agencies have been able to manipulate the press. However, many Western journalists are here, in Bosnia. How do you explain the fact that almost all of them are—in your opinion—prejudiced against the Serbs?

A: I think that there are several reasons. First, there are more American journalists in Muslim areas than in Serbian areas. Most of them only occasionally come to us and, therefore, receive most of their information from Muslim or Croatian sources. Moreover, the editorial departments play an important role. I had a long interview with John Burns that was never published. When I asked him why it never saw print, he told me that it was the editorial board's decision and not his. Some other journalists also told me that they wrote accurate reports, but that their editors said "No, we do not want this, we want something else." So I cannot blame all the journalists, although there are some who have been biased from the beginning.

Q: Do you plan to use p.r. techniques in order to change your image?

A: No, we do not. It is too late for us, and it costs a lot. We do not have the money of the Islamic world. What we are trying to do is to organize the Serbs of the Diaspora. Letter writing campaigns can greatly help. Our philosophy is the following: we know that TV is the most powerful medium. It has a strong emotional effect, but it does not last long. After the first impression, people start asking questions and want more information, facts, reasons. That is why I think that the written and spoken word will help us reveal the truth. Publishing books and articles also helps, despite the fact that we are unable, at this point, to penetrate Western libraries.

Q: Do you believe that this is a cultural, religious, or a nationalist war?

A: The simplest description of this war would be a civil war. However, all the three things you mentioned are interrelated. Let me explain. All people have a basic need for identity. The most mature form of group identity is the nation. So these different groups, Croats and Serbs, felt that they belonged in different groups. Muslims are a different case because they were Slavs who converted to Islam. All these groups wanted to have equal rights. And before the war, Dr. Karadjic and I suggested the creation of a Council for National Equality, because very important questions—like independence—can only be solved by consensus. If the Croats and Muslims had accepted this proposal, the war would never have occurred. In this sense, it is an ethnic war. Three ethnic groups are fighting each other. On the other hand, after years of studying Shakespeare, I realized that every culture has its cult, that every culture is based on a certain religious system. For example, Protestants emphasize personal purity, while the Orthodox stress brotherhood. So, in this respect, this war is also a religious one.

Q: What about the maps, and the effect territorial divisions have on the prospects for peace?

A: The division of land is not so big a problem that it could not be overcome. If we stop the war, if we try to identify the important strategic interests of each side, it will be easier to draw a satisfactory map. Let me give you an example. We know that the Muslims need access to the sea, a connection with the rest of the world. We understand this interest and are willing to negotiate. They should likewise understand our interest in the Breko corridor, because we need to have compact territory that connects us with Serbia proper. Their interest in the area is only to prevent our interest. So, we need to identify the strategic interests of each side and try to turn each political entity—the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and the Bosnian Federation—into a viable state. The problem we have now is that our state is not viable economically in terms of communications, energy, and infrastructure.

Q: Let us assume that the war is over and a loose federation is created. Would the Bosnian Serbs be satisfied with this or would they try to become a part of Serbia?

A: It is quite natural that we will be connected with Serbia, when the peace comes, because we belong in the same nation. The natural inclination will be for the Serbs to come together into one state. It does not have to be a Greater Serbia, a term that the Western press insists on. After all, we have lived here for hundreds of years. We have not "recently" occupied these territories. If we have peace, then we can use democratic means. We can ask the people of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia if they want to have a confederation with Serbia or with the Bosnian Federation.

Q: There is a lot of discussion about lifting the arms embargo. What do the Bosnian Serbs think about this?

A: I think this would be a real catastrophe. People who argue about this, especially United States Senator Bob Dole, are not aware of the consequences. The war will escalate not only in Bosnia but throughout the Balkans. I don't think that those people who support the lifting of the arms embargo are geographically and historically aware of the region's problems. They are 3,000 miles away, and it is easy for them to talk about it in a rather irresponsible way. On the other hand, I see that Europe is strongly against the American proposal because Europeans are aware of the consequences. There is another positive sign: the speed of political negotiations in Bosnia. It shows that Europeans are very keen to have peace in Bosnia before the whole thing blows up in the United States Congress. This is the positive side of the American proposal.

Q: My last question is about the accusations of ethnic cleansing and genocide. Could you comment on this?

A: Of course atrocities take place in any war. What has been hidden in this war is that atrocities have been committed by *all* sides. It was only when 10,000 Croats were forced [by Muslims] to leave Central Bosnia in 1993—and we helped them—that the world had to admit that the Serbs were not the only ones who were doing terrible things. I think that crimes have to be investigated in a democratic and legal way.

Q: What about the international community establishing a war crimes tribunal?

A: What is strange about this tribunal is that it looks more like political pressure than legal justice. The most modern

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aspect of Western thought is the idea of human rights, and this idea can be manipulated like all other ideas. But justice has to be done in a legal way, within the countries, perhaps with an international presence. Otherwise, it is an external pressure to the sovereignty and independence of our countries. In a Western democracy, we do not have the idea that someone outside the country can judge the guilt or innocence of a Serb, Muslim, American, or German. The idea of an outside judge is a very dangerous notion, because it means that the world order has a boss who is going to decide what this order will be. This contradicts the basic ideas of self-determination and sovereignty of a state. So, I think that the whole process needs to stay within national boundaries. Otherwise, should the world not also judge those who killed civilians in, say, the Persian Gulf War? What about Vietnam, Rwanda, Afghanistan? Why were international tribunals not established for these wars?

Yorgos Filiopoulos is a graduate student in journalism at the University of Memphis.

Letter From Soho

by Ann Sandhorst

Art Felons

◆

In Prince Street's early morning sunlight, Robert Lederman carefully removes the bungee cords holding a wooden "jail cell" to the top of his car. He sets up the metallic grey cell along the curb and surrounds it with protest signs, blow-ups of newspaper articles, and photographs of some of the nine times he's been arrested for selling his art. Next to the cell, he opens a folding screen on which brightly colored jazz prints and stark black-and-white street scenes are displayed. Drinking a cup of hot coffee, he greets other artists as they arrive and set up their own art displays. The scene, although reminiscent of an artist colony in Woodstock or Paris, is actually a battlefield, and Lederman is a resistance fighter preparing for battle.

"On Saturday, they usually come between noon and two o'clock," he says, referring to undercover police assigned to arrest artists for illegal vending. "They drive by once or twice in unmarked vans or taxicabs and look over the street. Then they drive back around and make the arrests."

The "jail cell" is part of an ongoing protest that Lederman and the artists have waged since last fall, when police began handcuffing and arresting artists and confiscating their work. Most of the art that gets confiscated and stuffed into black plastic garbage bags by the police is never seen again. While the total number of artist arrests citywide is unknown, there have been at least 100 arrests in Soho alone. In response to questions from a group of German art students, Lederman explains why he and his fellow artists are being arrested. "It's because of political pressure from community and real estate groups. In this specific area it's the Soho Alliance that forces the police to make the arrests. They're landlords and loft owners, many of whom are themselves artists, and they don't want artists or anyone else using what they see as 'their' sidewalks."

As president of A.R.T.I.S.T. (Artists' Response To Illegal State Tactics), Lederman is a familiar figure to the Soho Alliance. Besides insisting on displaying his art on the streets of Soho, he has organized loud demonstrations on the spots where artists are arrested, and continually urges the artists to fight for their rights. His jail cell, protest signs, and handbills parodying their demands that artists be arrested have put the alliance on the defensive.

Kathryn Freed, the city councilwoman whose district includes Soho and who is herself a longtime resident of the area, is closely aligned with the alliance and its goals. In an interview published in the *Christian Science Monitor*, she called the artists "parasites" and said, "they don't pay rent, they don't pay taxes . . . I'm fed up with these guys . . . Soho has hundreds of thousands of tourists . . . it's got too many people taking up too much space." Freed has been actively working to rid the area of street artists, vendors, and sidewalk cafes, the very things that visitors to Soho find most attractive. Members of the Soho Alliance claim that artist displays make their sidewalks impassable and that artists should show their work in galleries, not on the street. Some go so far as to say that what is shown on the street is not even art. "Their complaints are highly exaggerated," says Lederman. "The streets that have no artists are as crowded as the ones that do. If someone wants to live in the world's most famous city, he should expect an active, well-populated environment. New York has always been like this."

Initially, the city's plan for Soho was aimed at helping struggling artists. They were allowed to move into abandoned onetime manufacturing lofts which, when transformed into airy, well-lit art studios, became valuable real estate properties. The city council then formalized the arrangement by passing a law that only professional, working artists could occupy the lofts. Lederman's attorney, onetime prosecutor Marc Agnifilo, whose law office/art gallery is located in Soho, finds the situation ironic. "These successful artists," he comments, "are offended that other less fortunate artists want to display their work on the streets. They deliberately ignore the fact that the artists have a First Amendment right to freedom of speech and expression and that the public sidewalk is the *exact* place where that freedom is most protected."

The artists have gone to court to back up their claim to constitutional protection. Dewey Ballantine, a major law firm, in cooperation with Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts has filed a suit in federal court charging the city with violating the artists' First and 14th Amendment rights. They want the New York City vending ordinance changed to permit artists to display and sell their own original paintings, sculptures, limited-edition prints, and photographs. At the present time, only books, newspapers, baseball cards, and religious materials are allowed to be sold without a license, based on previous First Amendment challenges to the ordinance. Vending licenses are almost impossible to obtain.

The city council voted in 1979 to freeze the number of vending licenses at the 853 then in circulation. Other than veterans, who can get one on demand, anyone desiring a license must be on the waiting list, a wait which can take as long as five years. Richard Schrader, ex-commissioner of the Department of Consumer Affairs, the agency which issues all vending licenses, stated in an affidavit now included in the federal lawsuit that he "knew of no artist who had managed to obtain a vending license"; "that in

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Photo by Ann Sandhorst

some years as many as 5,000 people were on the waiting list"; and that "in some years not one license became available to any applicant."

When arrested, artists are charged with section 20-453 of the Administrative Code, unlicensed general vending. Their art is confiscated, damaged by mishandling, and often forfeited regardless of the outcome of the case in criminal court. According to artists who applied for a license, they were told by employees of the Department of Consumer Affairs that they, like booksellers, were protected by the First Amendment and did not need a license to sell their own art.

"It's a classic example of bureaucracy at work," says Lederman. "We're not allowed to get a license and then we're arrested for not having one! The city spends a few million dollars arresting artists, confiscating their work, forcing them through a lengthy court process and then dismisses every case. This makes it impossible for the artists or their attorneys to appeal a guilty decision or to challenge the constitutionality of the vending ordinance."

Knut Masco, one of the artists who displays his art on Prince Street, recently received a call from "Carlos," who said he'd just bought a large assortment of confiscated art at a city auction for $50, including five large window-paintings of Masco's. "He offered to sell them back to me," said Masco. "He said the auctioneer told the crowd at the auction that if nobody bought the lot it would all be destroyed. I told him to hang them in his apartment, that I wasn't interested." Masco is one of the plaintiffs in the federal suit and intends to sue the city for illegally confiscating and then selling his art.

While the artists claim that the city's tactic is to keep harassing them until fear of arrest and loss of their art drives them from the street, police department officials insist they are "just doing their job of enforcing the law." Ellie Ali has displayed her watercolors in front of the Prince Street Post Office for five years without incident. Then, in October, she was arrested twice by undercover cops who, when asked by onlookers how they could find so much time to bother artists, bragged that they were "working on overtime." "I'm afraid to bring out my best work," says Ellie. "You never know from day to day what the police will do."

As Prince Street comes to life, Lederman climbs inside his "jail cell" and asks passersby to sign a petition requesting Mayor Giuliani and the City Council to stop the arrests. "Do they really arrest artists?" a middle-aged woman asks Lederman after reading one of his signs. "That's terrible! Artists are the best thing on the streets. Why don't they bother somebody else!"

Although Mayor Giuliani has done nothing to stop the arrests or confiscations, he publicly admitted at a town hall meeting that "artists do have a First Amendment right to display and sell their own art on the street." Until they win their case in court, the artists will continue keeping a watchful eye out for the police. In a city administration already overburdened with efforts to handle crime, social problems, and decaying infrastructure, artist displays may continue to be a top priority.

Despite the constant threat of arrest and confiscation, the artists are determined to defend their right to sell their art. "Ultimately," says Lederman, "the city will come to realize that we are an asset, not a liability. Art enriches the social environment because it sensitizes people to beauty, to ideas, and to their own and each other's emotions. Right now we have a society filled with frustrated, desensitized individuals. If young people could see an opportunity to create and sell their own art instead of selling drugs or committing acts of meaningless violence, it might change this city in ways that all the multimillion-dollar social programs have failed to do."

Ann Sandhorst is a freelance writer and photographer living in Manhattan.

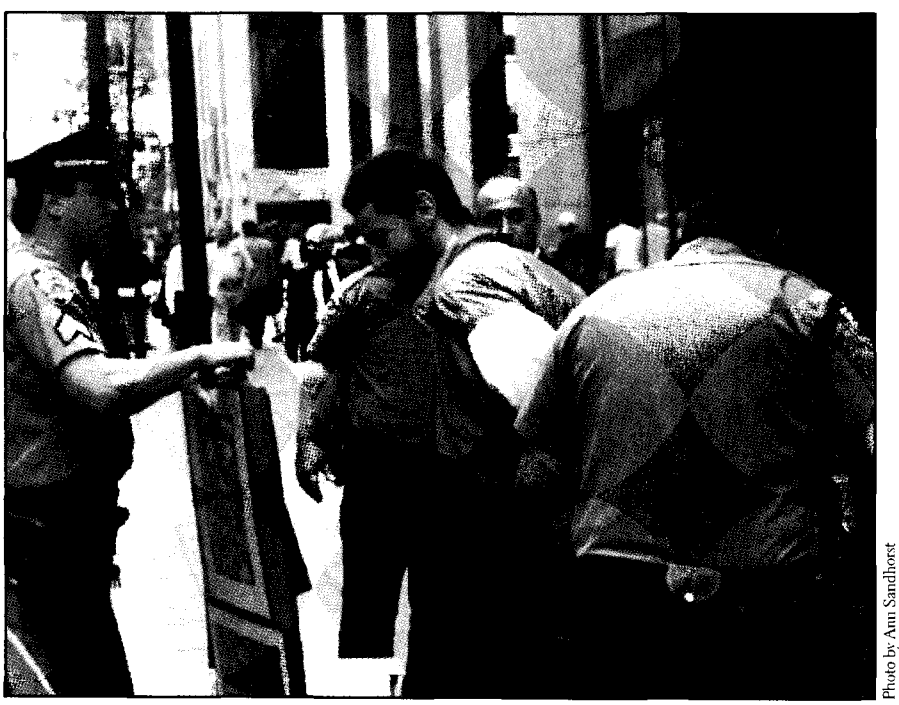

Photo by Ann Sandhorst

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GOVERNMENT

The Suppression of Public Virtue

by Congressman Robert K. Dornan

Our American government was founded on the ideal of *res publia*, the republic. History is filled with earnest attempts to create this ideal—Athens, Sparta, Rome—all of which served America's founders as the intellectual backdrop for a true new world order. The original conception of a classical republic held public virtue in highest esteem. Rulers, magistrates, and officeholders were to be disinterested (not *un*interested) players in government. In other words, political leaders were to set aside personal interests, whether parochial, professional, or business, and seek the best interests of the state or community in which they served. They were to be statesmen. Government service for personal gain was seen as immoral and lacking virtue, as was constituentism in any form. This was the ideal.

This ideal was inseparably connected to the practical benefits of liberty and virtue. Men dependent upon the graces, mercies, finances, and greed of others—not to mention the compounding of dependency caused by their own uncontrolled appetites—were unworthy of public trust. Public servants were to be independent of influence peddlers and, hence, at liberty to govern for the commonwealth. This prerequisite did not disqualify businessmen or any other group of men with commercial interests from public service. The essential quality of independence, although an important factor, was not necessarily of a material nature; rather it was more particularly moral. Classical republicanism held that fallen man could refine his nature to an exceptional degree, morally elevating himself to a level at which he could actually function independent of special interests and personal gain.

Now imagine the collective nature required of the electorate if this were the criteria for officeholders. Could they be any less virtuous or disinterested? Both the real strength and weakness of republican government is that it requires a moral citizenry. Its entire constitutional structure hangs on the virtue of its citizens. In fact, in ancient republics only "virtuous" people were allowed to be citizens. Certainly slaves could not be citizens. Neither could charlatans, drunkards, prisoners, or debtors. Who could trust any of these types with the future of a nation?

Of course, all of this high-mindedness was excused, if not expressly then conveniently ignored, almost immediately after its public enunciation due to the real nature of fallen man. For all their rhetoric, each *ancien régime* was soon corrupt and, even if later, fallen like its people. Even so, the ideal of a republic has captivated minds for centuries, not the least of which were the minds of our Founding Fathers.

Benjamin Franklin expressed it well when someone asked him what type of government we had in this new land, and he said "a republic if you can keep it." In *The Federalist*, Alexander Hamilton wrote that "it seems to have been reserved to the people of this country, by their conduct and example, to decide the important question, whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend for their political constitutions on accident and force." And George Washington was equally eloquent when he stated in his Farewell Address that "of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports." It was the same George Washington who, in his First Inaugural Address, renounced "every pecuniary compensation" in the name of public virtue and republican government.

Understanding that the ideal of a republic permeated America's infant political structures can help shed light on many of our modern civil contentions. Take the right to vote. Children taught civics today may very well take universal suffrage for granted, and yet not long ago voting was limited to a privileged few—to those classes viewed as disinterested; that is, their moral standing (largely determined by temporal holdings) allowed them to remain aloof of special interests so as to maintain the common good. Today such civil restrictions are generally viewed as the result of gross elitism and class distinctions of the worst kind.

Even if antirepublican special interests have been victorious to date, the rhetoric of republican government is still with us in various sickly shades and hues. Consider the decorum of Congress, which mandates that colleagues address each other as the "distinguished gentleman" and "my esteemed friend." Perhaps we think that if we say it enough, it might come true. Even further, examine the reputation of lawyers in our society. While Roman lawyers such as Cicero were once held in high esteem, our Founding Fathers suspected this "genteel profession" to a degree that remains with us today. They were seen by the Founders as parasites on society practicing a "groveling, mercenary trade" and incapable of participating in good government. Big businessmen were seen in a similar light. Nearly all of our instinctive suspicions regarding a variety of professions are a result of America's deep attraction to the ideal of republican government. To this day we still suspect somewhat the shaky backgrounds and complex financial dealings of individuals seeking to govern us.

The clearest evidence that republican government no longer exists in America is the size of government itself. If public servants are to be disinterested and removed from the selfish demands of special interests seeking favors, then surely one way of measuring their success at remaining aloof is by looking at the size, nature, and scope of government. Fortunately, for the purposes of a relatively short article we do not need a microscope to exact a measurement of our current standing. Millions of federal employees, tens of thousands of congressional staff, volumes of regulatory morass, years of backlogged court cases, trillion-dollar debts, an entrenched welfare state, cradle-to-grave intrusions, and marbled halls dripping with corruption are but a few examples. Not only

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does public virtue barely exist, there are few incentives for it ever to flourish again! In fact, it could be reasonably argued that public virtue existed in America only for brief moments, at our nation's inception and perhaps at a few other times, and that ever since each new day has brought its further diminishment.

In our failure to maintain the republic envisioned by our Founding Fathers, we have established a *politics of self-justification* and have elevated it beyond cult status to a point where it has become a sign of American patriotism—to suggest that any other way of governing ourselves exists is out of touch with reality and distinctly un-American.

The essential ingredients of this status are (1) the absence of truth or any real accountability or responsibility combined with (2) an ever-present reassurance that, though mortal, we are basically a good and decent people.

One practical illustration of the politics of self-justification is the modern welfare state. Our American system of government-provided welfare is founded upon the "moral" imperative to assist those in need *regardless of their circumstances*. In fact, to assess a person's circumstances, such as the reason he ended up needing assistance or alternatives to government help, is considered highly offensive, insensitive, and a disregard for humanity. Displays of compassion are to be unconditional, our compliant assistance mandatory, in such a system. We entered this extreme realm, as we always do, in our desire to cover our sins. We make mistakes and, not wanting to admit we are wrong and repent, we establish a social infrastructure to relieve us from their natural consequences. We have moved beyond the exercise and innate benefits of pure and undefiled religion to actually removing public incentives to be responsible, industrious, cautious, patient, and, above all, moral. We spend countless billions of dollars every year on idolatry in our quixotic quest to repeal the Fall absent the Atonement.

Another illustration of the self-justification practiced by our decayed society is sex education in the public schools. The underlying premise at work here is that *all* children will have sex regardless of what any of us adults do or say, so we might as well fortify them with instructions on how to avoid the pitfalls of illicit sexual relations. Of course, not all children fit this model. But a larger point is that many children have sexual relations out of wedlock *precisely because of what we adults do and say*! Liberal parents create radical children—or more precisely, unrepentant parents create unrepentant children—and what better way to insulate parental guilt than by establishing sexual promiscuity as some inherent human quality? We certainly see this pattern in other aspects of our culture. Alcoholism, drug addiction, violent behavior, homosexuality, male promiscuity, and female emotional imbalances are just a few maladies we try to excuse as the result of genetics or hormones.

Maybe the best example is the Congress of the United States where, in great and spacious buildings, the politics of self-justification have been refined into a multitrillion-dollar industry. As *semper fi* is to Marines, "tax, spend, and elect" is to Congress. When political charlatans threw off the confining shackles of limited government once and for all during the New Deal, they soon deduced just how easy the task of buying votes became. Congressmen were more than happy to console dysfunctional families and anesthetize them from the devastations of parental inattention and folly, as well as the toll from government intervention in the economy, to get themselves reelected to a cushy job with no heavy lifting. One glance at C-SPAN provides more than ample evidence that flimflammery is still in session and flourishing. Note how they posture, what they debate, and how they are all so glad to be part of such a distinguished body. You might soon forget that they produce nothing in society except managed chaos, empty pocketbooks, and hot air. But they, like everyone else who pretends to an earthly throne, know what is best for us—while we are more than happy to let them govern our lives. What is the price of slavery compared to the joy we find in self-justification for wrongdoing?

Public virtue, collectively speaking, is gone, yet it remains the key to a successful republic. Without it there is no hope of success. Without it there is no more America as it was once envisioned. We might as well call it something else. In fact, finding a new identity for ourselves seems to be a national pastime. Because there is no public virtue without personal virtue, the real answer to our national woes, fears, and identity crisis is found within each of us. It is man's search for happiness. It begins with the acceptance of what we used to call self-evident truths. It leads each of us to examine our lives honestly and then to make changes where necessary. It requires us to move off of comfortable plateaus, to sacrifice process for substance, and to do courageously anything necessary to remain free and "disinterested."

Congressman Robert K. Dornan (R-CA) is currently running for President of the United States.

Have a Good Day

by Philip Jenkins

After the initial horror of the Oklahoma City bombing, official reactions were certain to be heavy-handed, and a great many reasonable people were likely to be swept along with the draconian countermeasures proposed. We should not be surprised about the sweeping nature of the so-called "counterterrorist" laws suggested this spring, which included the inevitable package of restrictions on the rights of immigrants and aliens, increased federal surveillance powers, and greater powers to infiltrate subversive groups. Measures of this sort have been on the collective wish-list of the federal justice agencies for years, and naturally enough they have taken this unparalleled opportunity to expand their powers. The time is perfect precisely because so few legislators have the temerity right now to vote against anything labeled an "Anti-Terrorism Law."

Though the FBI and its ilk have often been accused of cynical empire-building, the agencies themselves do not emerge as the villains in recent debates. Refreshingly, many federal bureaucrats have been honest enough to admit that even if the various proposed powers had been available a year or two ago, they would not have prevented the terrorist attack which ignited the current fervor. When pressed, some will even state the obvious truth, that the authorities have always possessed a staggering range of powers that can be mobilized given the slightest plausible suspicion of a terrorist act or a potential assassination, and that claims that the post-Hoover FBI was "hamstrung" against dissident groups were largely bogus. All you ever needed was a claim that group X was planning an

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armed attack (which you obtained from a stooge within the group) and this permitted the unleashing of the whole panoply of wiretaps, penetrations, and RICO prosecutions. As with the CIA, the FBI's current demands are a frank power play to avert calls for the dismantling of an agency which has outlived its usefulness.

What has been remarkable, even breathtaking, about the panic over the alleged terrorist threat has been the role of elected officials and specifically the Clinton White House, which has been indulging in a rhetoric with quite frightening implications. The whole affair is richly illustrative of the thinking both of the President himself and of his immediate circle. Shortly after the Oklahoma City blast, Clinton launched what was obviously a long-prepared campaign against "hate campaigns" and "irresponsible" political rhetoric, which he linked to the attack. This needed urgently to be supplanted by a "new civility" in public discourse. For good measure, the administration and its media friends then constructed a terrifying menace on the extreme right, which included not only armed ultraright terror groups but also "militias," survivalists, hate groups, white supremacists, Klansmen, gun rights activists, and conservative media personalities. The tactic of guilt by association is blatant.

As a political campaign, there is nothing new here. The construction of an imaginary menace to taint one's political opponents has countless precedents in American history, and it is tempting but misleading to refer to this tactic as "McCarthyite." In this particular case, Clinton's genesis of a fascist menace has different origins, ironically in the very scare which McCarthy used as his model. Both Clinton and McCarthy drew directly on the "Brown Scare" of the late 1930's, when Franklin Roosevelt used the antics of the German-American *Bund* and Father Coughlin to stigmatize all his conservative and isolationist opponents as part of a "Brown Front," all more or less tools of Berlin. There too, the White House used its wide network of media allies, notably Walter Winchell. The rhetorical resemblances are so close that Clinton was almost certainly mimicking Roosevelt. While he could have read about the FDR campaign in Robert Herzstein's fine book *Roosevelt and Hitler*, it is also useful to remember that Hillary believes herself possessed by the spirit of Eleanor Roosevelt. Furthermore, the earlier charges were orchestrated by none other than Harold Ickes, whose namesake is so prominent in the contemporary Democratic leadership.

What gives weight to the Clinton charges is that these appear to be setting the standards by which the federal agencies will choose the targets for their new war on terrorism, and if so, democratic rights are in for an exceedingly grim few years. The whole concern about giving agencies the right to investigate terrorist groups "proactively" is that it is so difficult to define "terrorist," still harder to pin down "potentially terrorist" or "terrorist sympathizer." If Clinton's standards apply, then there is a simple criterion, of whomever the administration and its employees choose not to like at any given time. At present, that is likely to mean anyone who can be portrayed as "radical right," but in a few years, it could include almost anyone sufficiently unwise as to participate in the political process more often than every other November. When the Clinton people said that the antiterrorist proposals demanded bipartisanship, they presumably meant that both political shades would suffer equally from this legislative foolishness.

Pro-life activists? Clearly part of the same network that assassinates doctors and bombs clinics. Environmentalist tree-huggers seem harmless enough, but what about animal rights bombings and vandalism at research facilities? Better to be prepared: begin a mail-opening and wiretap operation, and maybe send in some of our people to test them a little, talk about planning a violent act, and see how many of them respond. We can even supply the explosives as a bait! The same principles cover both the pro- and antiabortion movements, immigrants' rights activists, environmentalists, civil libertarians, gun control opponents, Irish nationalists, and any person or group protesting the misdeeds of any foreign nation, right or left. It would include critics of any American military involvement overseas, and of course anyone protesting the abuse of the new investigative powers. Taking Clinton literally, the terrorist front seems to include anyone who speaks harshly about his regime. Still worse, the proposed measures appear to be retroactive, meaning that agencies could intervene against someone who had in the past contributed to or written on behalf of a group that was then legal, but was subsequently deemed terrorist, or vice versa: for example, an American citizen who supported the African National Congress in 1985 or Sinn Fein in 1990. It is difficult to imagine any support whatever for Arab or Middle Eastern political groups that could not fall into the category of "terrorist sympathy."

If any of this seems farfetched, consider the revealing moment in the committal hearings of one of the Michigan suspects accused in the Oklahoma City bombing, when the defendant's lawyer admitted that his client possessed a wide range of guns and militaria. The federal judge declared that he too owned firearms, "but I don't have any Waco material in my house, I don't have any antigovernment material in my house, and I don't believe most of the people in the country have those things." And there, concisely, we have the stigmata that denote the terrorist. A terrorist is a person, probably a gunowner, who reads, watches, or transmits "antigovernment material," a curious phrase in a democracy and one that should not be on the lips of a judge.

Not all antigovernment material would count here, only those items suggesting that the administration has engaged in gross illegality or the excessive use of force, perhaps resulting in deaths on a large scale. As a concrete example, "Waco material" tells us what to look out for. Accounts of the Waco affair as such are fine, so long as they depict ruthless cultists murdering themselves and their children and launching unprovoked attacks on armed federal agents amicably making their way through their windows. Totally unacceptable would be any of the books, videotapes, or news articles that present a different picture. This would not, however, be burdensome, as there are only a few million of these items in circulation, and they should be disposed of immediately.

In the interests of President Clinton's "new civility," there are certain things that can no longer be permitted, as they lead to terrorism and violence. "Waco material" is high on the list, but it would be a good idea to check through your library for other related antigovernment paraphernalia. To be on the safe side, any souvenirs of Watergate and the Iran-Contra affair should probably go, as they present the federal government as a behemoth freely violating legality. I suppose old videos of *JFK* and *Executive*

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Action should follow, together with any gun magazines. Make it an excuse for a real housecleaning! Virtually every religious bookstore in North America should begin an immediate review of its volumes on the New World Order, Waco, and political matters generally. And as for the *Clinton Chronicles* video . . . !

Not that free thought will be imperiled by these proposals. Think what you like: just don't say it, discuss it over the phone, and by no means contribute to the culture of "hate radio." Above all, keep it off the computer networks, which will be carefully checked and purged, to avert the flowering of unfettered discussion that has been the bane of older media. Why, taken together with attempts to keep indecent or disturbing material off the Internet, the whole anarchic individualist world of electronic communication might be strangled at birth! If only such "responsibility" had prevailed when the medium of print was new, how many dangerous and unsettling notions might have been prevented!

More than anything else, the "new civility" demands a new and positive attitude toward government, one freed from the psychotic hostility that has had such parlous consequences in the past. For example, the present administration has been much criticized, and there are frankly some incidents which I personally do not understand. Why, for example, is there so much evidence that Vincent Foster was killed somewhere else and his body then dumped where it was eventually found? Why does no half-informed person believe that a crazed bank manager in Atlanta suddenly decided to give the Iraqis billions of dollars to build up their arms program, without the slightest connivance from a United States government agency? I do not know the answers, and a few weeks ago, I might have believed that there were suspicious angles to these stories. Now, I must struggle to believe that there is a good explanation, as it is my civic duty in a responsible democracy neither to assess the evidence nor to pursue the ideas to a logical conclusion.

Over the last months, I have been thinking back to a classic science fiction story written in 1953, more for the mood than for any specific analogy to current events. Jerome Bixby's *It's a GOOD Life* imagined a town cursed with a telepathic neighbor possessing supernatural powers. Whatever the provocation, each character in the story knows that he must never think an evil or unhappy thought, for if the monstrous stranger knows that you are unhappy, his twisted benevolence will cause him to strike out instantly to end your misery. As a result, everyone must always maintain an apparent cheerfulness, never letting the slightest discontent cross his mind. The final passage is memorable: "It did no good to wonder about it. Nothing at all did any good—except to live as they must live. Must always, always live, if Anthony would let them. These thoughts were dangerous, she thought. . . . Next day it snowed and killed off half the crops—but it was a *good* day." Thoughts should not be dangerous; we should not be afraid to express them as freely as possible; and we should not even have to make this case in a democracy.

Civility and responsibility used to be such positive words. Now, I'm not sure.

* * *

Postscript: Nothing in the above text should in any way be construed to imply that federally elected or appointed officials should be held accountable for acts of illegality or excessive force committed in the course of their duties, or that such actions should result in any form of investigation, prosecution, or impeachment.

Philip Jenkins heads the religious studies program at Penn State University. He is the author of Using Murder: The Social Construction of Serial Homicide.

Giraffes, Jellybeans, and the USDA

by David T. Wright

All over official Washington, D.C., the big buzzword these days is "Diversity." Cultural Diversity is not only the latest certified Wonderful Thing, it is Inevitable; and our arbiters of conscience have elevated it to the status of a sacrament.

As a result, Washington office workers are constantly subjected to important events like American Indian Heritage Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, etc., etc. Each has its posters, slogans, hall displays, "festivals," strange food in the cafeteria, and so on. We are bombarded with blather about Gorgeous Mosaics, Rainbow Societies, Toleration, Dignity, and, of course, that most sacred of all buzzwords, Change. Gorgeous Mosaics do have their limits, though. Asking when we'll see an Anglo-Saxon Heritage Month gets you nothing but a hard stare.

Despite, or maybe because of, the Inevitability and manifest goodness of Diversity, the Establishment tolerates no criticism of it. The Department of Agriculture recently decreed that conformance to "Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights goals and objectives" is a critical element of every USDA bureaucrat's performance. In plain English, this means that you can get a permanent black mark on your job performance record just for criticizing the current policy of favoritism toward nonwhites, or even for telling an ethnic joke.

This was all well under way during the Bush administration, but things took a decided turn for the worse when the barefoot boy from Hot Springs and his grisly crew took over. Rumor has it that when new Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy, the former congressman from Mississippi who later got caught with his hand in the cookie jar, first toured the department's Washington buildings, he complained of seeing "too many fat, middle-aged white guys." True or not, the nouveau régime wasted no time implementing an aggressive but undeclared new policy: no new Civil Service jobs or promotions for able-bodied white males. White men whose promotions were not final saw them revoked and given to members of accredited victim groups.

The ban does not extend to patronage appointments, of course, so white Civil Service employees must endure the spectacle of overpaid middle-aged white guys lying through their teeth about white male job prospects and pontificating about the glories of Diversity and Change. Joining in this conspiracy are upper-level Civil Service white guys, frantically toadying in hopes that their own high-paying jobs will not be wiped out as this administration Reinvents Government.

It was in this spirit that the department mounted the "USDA Work Force Diversity Conference: Managing Work Force 2000, Challenges and Opportunities." It took up two full days at Washington, D.C.'s convention center, a great tomb of a building near the Martin

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Luther King main library, a favorite haunt of local derelicts. Incidentally, the panhandlers infesting the city have enthusiastically latched on to the new zeitgeist. One day, walking home from the Metro station, I was accosted by a character who got mad when I wouldn't give him any money. He followed me for two blocks, calling me a racist. "We been oppressed for *centuries*!" he screamed. "My grandmother was a *slave*! I'm entitled to some *relaxation*!"

The first speaker, a Dr. Roosevelt Thomas, D.B.A., informed us that achieving Diversity means helping out everybody but white males. Moreover, he said, affirmative action, or quotas, is not good enough, because it "assumes conformity." Dr. Thomas sees a Diverse workplace as a jar of jellybeans. "You have red jellybeans. And you have purple and yellow jellybeans. Do you have an appropriate mixture of jellybeans at each level?" He pointed out that, because red jellybeans are the dominant confections in the jar, many purple and yellow jellybeans have become assimilated, or transformed. They have almost become red, so the diversity in the jar is only "surface" diversity. This is double-plus ungood. Therefore, we must learn to "value" true Diversity, and "create an environment for each jellybean," so that it will feel at home and not have an identity crisis. As Dave Barry might say, I'm not making this up.

Just what "creating an environment" means he explained with a new metaphor. A giraffe invites his friend the elephant over to his house, and asks him to make himself at home. The elephant has trouble, and damages the house because he's too heavy for the stairs, too wide for the doors, and so on. Now, in my own humble opinion, the giraffe ought to put his friend up in a hotel for the night. But no. According to Dr. Thomas, the only moral thing for the giraffe to do is rebuild his entire house to accommodate the elephant. I'm not making this up, either.

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The conference moderator then told us that the USDA does not have an "appropriate house," and that it will have to be rebuilt. It will be up to the department to accommodate itself to different cultures, disabilities, and, ominously, "preferences." Of course, what this often means in practice is putting people in positions that they are not competent to fill, a policy whose effects are already felt in the Department of Agriculture. Take Dayton J. Watkins, for instance. A former senior official with the District of Columbia Housing Authority, he was given a job as Acting Administrator of the USDA Rural Business and Cooperative Development Service around the same time his former place of employment was taken over by a federal court due to gross mismanagement.

Then there's Sharron Longino, USDA's version of Joycelyn Elders. She worked in a bottom-feeding job as a constituent caseworker for now-former Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy when he was a congressman from Mississippi. When he hit it big, she was put in charge of the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA), a huge agency responsible for administering over $50 billion in farm and rural housing loans. According to sources there, she hinted that she was an attorney, but it was quickly learned that her highest degree was from a secretarial school. She soon became infamous for Elders-style bombast, earning the nickname "Rocket" for her leisurely pace and limited grasp of finance and administration. She dressed down one field officer because the agency didn't have enough *delinquent loans in his state.*

Lunchtime enlightenment was provided by a professional disabled woman named Evelyne Villines, "Member Emeritus of the President's Committee on Employment of People With Disabilities," according to the conference brochure. Her presentation was almost maudlin enough to make a sensitive person lose his ration of vegetarian pasta. She wailed about the injustice of her affliction, polio, and how when she was a child they wouldn't let her cry in the hospital. She complained that she hadn't received enough hugs, and pointed out that each of us needs four hugs a day to stay alive, eight for maintenance, and twelve to "grow." She dredged up every indignity ever inflicted on her by insensitive, rude, and stupid people. "You will *never* understand the pain I suffered!" she cried. This was one angry woman.

Mrs. Villines described how, during the Disabled March on Washington, she had walked with her son on the Mall, near the Lincoln Memorial, where the marchers were bivouacked, and how many of them crowded around and "kissed my hand in gratitude for my testimony" before Congress in support of the Americans With Disabilities Act. Then, she told us (so help me), her son laid aside her crutches, took her in his arms, and carried her up the steps of the Memorial to the Great Emancipator, telling her, "God gave me to you so I could do this for you tonight." She exited to a standing ovation, through which I sat astonished, like Miss Manners at the Mad Hatter's Tea Party.

Next were "workshops" with titles like "Growing Diversity in the Work Force," "Diversity in the Workplace: Who Benefits? Who Changes?" "Cross-Gender Communication," etc. I got to go to one entitled "Developing and Managing a Culturally Diverse Work Force: Tools for Achieving Diversity." This purported to provide "Tools, strategies, and models for assessing, developing, managing, and monitoring an organization to achieve a healthy, culturally diverse work force." In reality, it did nothing of the kind.

The "Growing Diversity" workshop was led by a Dr. David Hayes-Bautista, who is a professor at UCLA's School of Medicine and the director of UCLA's Chicano Studies Research Center. His doctorate is in "Medical Sociology," whatever that is. In a nutshell, Dr. Hayes-Bautista's message was: we're taking over, so get used to it. He announced triumphantly that Anglos in California would be a minority by the year 2000, and spoke of the new "Emergent Majority" for whose domination we must prepare. Preparation means "developing and maintaining Diversity" through "recruitment, retention, professional development, and succession planning." Translated, this means that employers must go out, find, and recruit enough employees belonging to the right ethnic groups, do whatever it takes to make them like their jobs, and refrain from firing them for whatever reason. They must give these employees whatever training and education they require to actually do their work, promote them whether they are any good or not, and make room for them at the top so that

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they can assume their rightful places there. Good work habits must, of course, be "elicited, not coerced."

The good doctor did not, as promised, tell us how to accomplish all this. Instead, he spent his time attacking critics of multiculturalism. He projected a slide of a *National Review* cover published after the L.A. riots, with a photo of a man, possibly Hispanic, walking away from a burning store with a huge case of Coca-Cola. The headline said "How to Get a Week's Groceries Absolutely Free, Plus $600 Million in Federal Aid." This, he pointed out, was typical of the intolerant majority attitude. For example, the fellow in the picture was not carrying any nutritious food at all, only soft drinks. "I hope this gentleman got his week's worth of groceries," he said.

The descent into silliness accelerated the next morning with a presentation by a Mr. David Crocker, who runs a firm that, in the lilting language of the conference brochure, "specializes in the design, development, and presentation of lectures, seminars, and training programs to enhance executive, management, and organizational effectiveness." Like the others, Mr. Crocker railed about bad attitudes on the part of white people, using as a rather perplexing illustration a news story about "two men robbing a store." They must be white, he pointed out, because if they were black, the news media would say "two *black* men."

Hiring people by ethnic group according to the makeup of the local population is not good enough, he informed us. "I measure my people by Diversity!" he declaimed, and told us that one must scour the country, if necessary, perhaps even relocate, to relieve the lily-whiteness of one's workplace. "Can't find no black people in Minneapolis?" he roared. "Gotta go to a *black university*!" He enlivened his tirade with bewildering predictions about how the "chain of command" is obsolete and will be replaced by a "spider web."

But the best was yet to come. Our lunchtime speaker was to be David Pearce Snyder, the "Life-Styles Editor" of *The Futurist* magazine. Mr. Snyder, a bearded, excitable man, was in triumphalist ecstasies about the coming Information Age. According to him, the new Information Highway will Revolutionize Society, and "a Cornucopia of the Benefits of Technology is going to Sweep Down On Us." As we pecked at our tiny portions of broiled fish and shredded zucchini, Mr. Snyder regaled us with his vision of America's imminent metamorphosis into Utopia. He told us that the problems of poverty, high crime, societal upheaval, and so on, are the result of the "transition to an *infomated* society." It is this transition that is responsible for the rise of the neo-Nazis in Europe, the National Front in Britain, and, of course, Vladimir Zhirinovsky. This "transformation process" will climax in the flowering of a new age. A restructured economy will provide custom-tailored goods to everyone, and dramatically increase our standard of living. The "infomated" society will custom-tailor a place for everyone, of whatever race, culture, or disability. Of course, this means that America will thrive on Diversity.

Mr. Snyder became increasingly energetic. He waved his arms. He made little fists. Hierarchical companies and organizations will be Reinvented as collections of teams, he told us. USDA's job, he said, will be to use the Information Highway to Retool Government and Reinvent Agriculture. "Let's turn agriculture into the first sector of the economy that's *completely infomated*!" he exhorted. In our holy quest for the next higher plane of existence, Diversity will be invaluable, according to Mr. Snyder. It "gives a yeasty tension" to society. It is the "key to exceptionality." It gives us our moral standing and leadership in the world. Because of it, in fact, "we are the world!"

Sure, he admitted, the transition will be difficult. So, he said, the Revolution must have the power to "break legs." Besides, he proclaimed, "the Founding Fathers never said it would be easy to be the World's Greatest Society." He wound up by evoking the travails of the Pioneers, and quoting "our greatest Founding Father, Benjamin Franklin [*Benjamin Franklin*?]: 'Given the difficulty, it is worth the candle!'" before subsiding to thunderous applause.

There was more, but I didn't stick around to see it. Instead I staggered outside, half expecting to exit into a Martian landscape with purple sky and chartreuse clouds, but finding instead the same old decrepit D.C. downtown, winos and all. That night I started updating my resumé, which now begins David Wright-Lopez.

David T. Wright writes from Washington, D.C.

RADIO

Weak Reception

by Stacey Kors

Several months ago I attended a concert at New York's Lincoln Center commemorating the 50th anniversary of WNYC, the not-for-profit radio station that is home to National Public Radio, and one of only two stations left in Manhattan that broadcast classical music. (The third, WNCN, recently switched over from yesterday's court favorites to today's rock favorites.) At that time, WNYC's commercial license was still owned by the city—it has since been purchased by the WNYC Foundation—and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani was threatening to sell it in an effort to help ease New York's budgetary woes. It is, unfortunately, an oft-repeated government scenario, and one that is especially popular in the current Gingrich-led Congress: when money gets tight, stick it to the arts. Why it surprises me each and every time it happens I do not know. Anyway, in the midst of this potential crisis, the station decided to throw a party. In what was undoubtedly a Herculean—and *highly* last minute—effort, Mayor Giuliani made an anniversary declaration to WNYC in which he promised not to sell the station unless there was "no other alternative." And with that quasi-encouraging piece of news, the evening's festivities began.

Suppose that a much-admired restaurant celebrated the anniversary of its opening with a special tasting menu, created by some of the most renowned chefs of the day. Now suppose that all that the menu offered was chicken, prepared in a variety of ways. A quaint idea, perhaps; but no matter how different the entrées' presentations may be on the surface, when you remove all the fancy sauces and pickles, you are still left with, well, chicken. And even if you simply *adore* the agreeable fowl, by the third or fourth course your taste buds will probably grow tired of it.

My ears suffered a similar plight at the WNYC concert. On the menu was Pulitzer Prize-winning John Ashbery's

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previously unpublished poem, "No Longer Very Clear," served up by some of the "Big Names" in contemporary classical music: Philip Glass, John Corigliano, Joan Tower, Anthony Davis, Morton Gould, Milton Babbitt, and half a dozen others. The poem—introduced by Ashbery at the start of the concert—reads as follows:

It is true that I can no longer
remember very well
the time when we first began to
know each other.
However, I do remember very well
the first time we met. You walked
in sunlight,
holding a daisy. You said,
"Children make unreliable
witnesses."

Now, so long after that time,
I keep the spirit of it throbbing
still.
The ideas are still the same, and
they expand
to fill vast, antique cubes.

My daughter was reading one just
the other day.
She said, "How like pellucid
statues, Daddy. Or like a . . .
an engine."

In this house of blues the cold
creeps stealthily upon us.
I do not dare to do what I fantasize
doing.
With time the blue congeals into
roomlike purple
that takes the shape of alcoves,
landings . . .
Everything is like something else.
I should have waited before I
learned this.

Given the dubious status of WNYC, the title was ironic enough; more so when you consider the third stanza, where Ashbery, in characteristic fashion, interrupts what is otherwise a lovely poem with an offhand and ambiguous conversational aside, surely an example of the "opaque playfulness" that one *New York Times* reviewer has attributed to Ashbery's work. But what was odder still was that the very same stanza about "pellucid statues"—by far the *least* pellucid section of the poem—was the one focused on by a surprising number of the composers on the program, an oddity that is best explained in the words of Henry Fielding: "They are the affectation of affectation." I must, however, give credit where it is due, for not every composer exhibited such pretentiousness: Robin Holcomb admitted that she had to look "pellucid" up in the dictionary; and Anthony Davis had the courage to tamper with the work of a Pulitzer Prize winner and omit the third stanza entirely because, as he explained, "It just didn't speak to me."

It did, however, speak to John Corigliano. Corigliano, whose vision was explained by the sadly humorless leader of the all-female Bassoon quartet for which he composed the piece, was apparently very taken with the contrasting images of the hot, pulsating engine and the fixed, frozen, stone statues. Indeed, it would not have hurt Corigliano to follow Ms. Holcomb's lead. As far as his piece "How Like Pellucid Statues, Daddy (or like a . . . an engine)" is concerned, let's just say that it was not any worse than I would have expected from a piece written expressly for four bassoons.

Philip Glass' creation, "Now, So Long After That Time," sounded no different from any of his others: a painfully monotonous cascade of chords. He could have just as easily titled it "Recycled Glass," and it would not have made the least bit of difference in my assessment of the piece.

The award for the most original—and, for that matter, farfetched—interpretation of the evening, however, was won hands down by composer Steven Mostel and his group, the Tibetan Singing Bowl Ensemble. (For those of you who are somehow unfamiliar with these "instruments," Tibetan singing bowls are metal bowls of different sizes which emit an increasingly loud humming sound when repeatedly stroked with a pestle-like object along their outer rim.) Mr. Mostel, who, as a rule, does not like setting words because he feels that they only detract from the music, decided to set only the vowels in the poem—after all, what could be uglier than the sound of a consonant? During rehearsals, however, his singers kept returning to the words. Instead of taking this as a sign that maybe the words in their entirety were the way to go, he chose instead to set only the vowels of what he thought were the two most important "concept words" in the poem: "True" and "No." Yes, this is true; and no, I cannot explain, except to say that it was an interminable ten minutes. (Apparently, Mr. Mostel isn't much on brevity, either.)

As for the others—"Or Like A . . . ," "like a . . . an engine," and a handful imaginatively called "No Longer Very Clear"—admittedly, my recollection of them is no longer very clear. The one thing I do remember, however, is the poem itself, which has been drilled into my memory from repeated hearings. Like it or not, it sits in my mind, perched awkwardly beside the works of such poetic paragons as Shakespeare, Tennyson, Longfellow, and Donne, taking up precious space in the corner of a not-yet-antique cube.

I should have waited before I learned this.

Stacey Kors is a freelance writer in New York. She is a contributing editor to Opera Monthly *and writes regularly for* The Opera Quarterly *and* Stagebill.

Radio Days

by Mark Racho

In England, it used to be possible to drift into a doctorate-level education simply by listening to the radio. A child could begin with adventure serials and comedies, graduate to radio theater versions of classic plays and novels or documentaries about historical figures, and end up listening to an Oxford don talking about the Oxford Movement. Having been exiled to New York for the past several years, I do not know if this still applies, but I do know that serious radio programming in America hardly exists. Whereas in England, Radios Three and Four (the Third Program and Home Service of old) would broadcast lectures, documentaries, and plays, their American equivalents on National Public Radio seem able only to lecture.

For those who love radio, spinning the dial in search of intelligent life in the American ether can be a disheartening experience. New York has the world's largest radio market and more stations than any other city—I have listened to most of them and can report mostly disappointment. It is depressing to compare my childhood listening in England with the intellectual fare served up to American youngsters on WNYC (New

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York's Public Radio station) and the independent station WBAI. As a first-generation English boy who spoke only Polish at home, BBC radios Three and Four helped me become acculturated to Englishness at its best, and helped me develop an understanding of English character, history, and literature. Listening to WNYC and WBAI, first-generation and immigrant children in New York are likely to learn only loathing for their adoptive country—and if they are black or Hispanic, they will also be patronized and catered to in the most nauseating way.

I first came across Shakespeare, Victor Hugo, Scott, Stendhal, the Greek tragedians, Sei Shonagon (of the "Pillow-book"), and Jane Austen by listening to radio dramatizations of their works. As the radio drama on NPR seems mostly to be by or about lesbians or congenital idiots, I wonder what there is to enthrall and educate an American child turning for entertainment or solace to the radio? I recall falling in love with Shelley's "Epipsychidion" at the age of 12 because an English professor did a program on it. Poetry on WNYC? Forget it. Later, in my teens, I remember amazing some older Americans on vacation from Louisiana by talking to them about Huey Long. Most graduate history students in America could not tell Huey Long from Huey Lewis, they told me. Of course, I was lucky; most graduate students never got to hear Radio Three's documentary on the "Kingfish." Nor could they hear Conor Cruise O'Brien talk about modern history, Edward Lucie Smith about art, David Munrow about early music, and Enoch Powell about Herodotus.

Admittedly, American media are mostly anti-intellectual (or worse, pseudointellectual) and market-driven, but that is precisely why NPR ought to be providing programming that makes high culture freely available to all. Everyone has access to a radio, even in the ghetto and the inner city. Accidentally coming across broadcasting that is civilized, noble, and high-minded might enlighten and inspire underprivileged children to stop rapping and start reading. So what does NPR provide? A mélange of fake hipness, condescension, and "diversity"; all the same correctly political hogwash whose heroes are all Latinos, "proud black women," AIDS victims, and "artists." From it one learns nothing one did not already know.

Are there no characters left on public radio? No eccentrics? Virtually all the people who broadcast on WNYC are soft-voiced snobs, full of piety and fake concern. I used to listen to Robert Robinson's "Stop the Week" on the BBC. Bob Robinson (a cross between Dr. Johnson and Mr. Pickwick) held civilized and amusing conversations with three or four friends, and all of them said what the hell they liked. I remember listening to Marghanita Laski and Eleanor Summerfield, real women, feminine, witty, charming, and rude when necessary, women who could not be sexually harassed, women who seemed to be 18th-century *mesdames de salons* come to life. Compare such folks with the homogenized feminists and New Men on WNYC.

WBAI, the listener-sponsored Pacifica station, is worse. It could well be named Radio Chomsky—its fundraising drives usually involve selling tapes of the good professor's speeches or remaindered copies of his books. The presenters are even more soft-voiced and hip than the ones on WNYC, and they think that everything is a CIA plot. The host of the morning show sounds like a black Uriah Heep, mumbling quietly to the rapt audience, so arrogant, yet so very humble. Much of the station's output is devoted to the Afrocentric cult, and it shares this perspective with the frightening ruminations and rantings on WLIB, "1190 The Choice" (a "black-oriented" talk station). The choice appears to be between necklacing and shooting. If the station is truly as "representative of the African-American community" as it claims, then racial war is unpleasantly close.

So much for serious programming in New York. There remain the attempts to entertain. The golden age of American radio is obviously gone—no longer can children cut their imaginative teeth on "The Shadow" or "Escape" or "Dangerous Assignment." Instead we have Imus in the Morning. Mr. Imus's morning show is the only program in America that makes me glad to be living here in 1995 rather than 1945. The show is resolutely masculine in the best sense of the word. Imus himself is the nearest thing we have to H.L. Mencken these days, and his production crew ably supports him with sardonic comments and insults. Charles McCord writes satirical pieces (performed by an excellent impressionist) and is probably the best comic writer in America today. His monologues for a spoof on "Cardinal O'Connor" (reading out the lottery results) are hilarious, as are the frequent interruptions by the President's drug-fiend "brother."

That's about it for radio comedy. The rest of the FM dial is distributed among brain-dead "easy listening" slush, St. Vitus dance music, and a couple of college radio stations, one of which played 24 hours of Bix Beiderbecke on his birthday. It is possible to hear good jazz and classical music on New York radio, but only if you can get past the annoyingly attitudinizing DJ's. Radio Three, the classical music station in England, has presenters who are polite, informative, and self-deprecating; for some reason their New York counterparts are made up of the worst type of pretentious poseur: "We hear, from the BWV catalogue, and have heard, the kappellmeister, gessellschaft Dresden, perhaps Schnabelwopski 1714 . . ."

That leaves AM radio. Among younger people, it is fashionable to claim no knowledge of the existence of the AM dial. Talk radio lurks there, and the people doing the talking are usually middle-aged or elderly. The talk is resolutely and angrily political, political in a way that is

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likely to amaze British listeners used to politeness rather than politics on "Auntie Beeb" (the BBC). There is nothing quite like it in England, where there are few talk radio stations, and what few do exist are mostly given over to tedious cockneys maundering on about their arthritis. American talk radio, however, has an angry edge to it that is entertaining to the foreigner, if less piquant to the jaded palate of the native. The first time I heard Bob Grant scream "Get off my phone, you scumbag!" in his best W.C. Fields accent, I must admit I was hooked.

Mr. Grant's afternoon show on WABC garners a sizable number of what he describes as "gavones and cacazotes" (Mr. Grant is of Italian heritage), and he gives them short shrift. The rest of the audience is made up mainly of uneducated but well-meaning working stiffs from New Jersey and Long Island, confused and frustrated by America's long drawn-out suicide. In a four-hour ritual, Mr. Grant recites his favorite catchphrases like a priest chanting spells to ward off the devils let loose in the Republic he loves: "It's sick out there, folks, and getting sicker," "We're slipping and sliding into Third Worldism," "Fake phony fraud," and "the double-gated crowd." Bêtes noires of the program are referred to by nickname: the feckless ex-Mayor Dinkins as "the men's room attendant," Hillary Clinton as "Evita Peron," and Mario Cuomo as "The Sfacim." During the 1994 election campaign, the Democratic machines in the New York and New Jersey area concocted a McCarthy-style plot to brand Grant a racist. Campaign workers with friends at *New York* magazine suggested an attack upon the radio host, and the magazine duly came out with a front cover blaring "Bob Grant: Why he hates blacks." Those Republicans who took advantage of his ratings and support were, of course, guilty by association.

Another WABC host I listen to regularly is Jay Diamond. I was drawn to his late-night show because he has an old-fashioned mellow radio voice, and he speaks in complete sentences. Following on Mr. Diamond's heels is the overnight show of Guardian Angel founder Curtis Sliwa. No one knows the mean streets of this great and crumbling metropolis better than Sliwa, and no one is better informed as to what's going on. The Mafia attempted to assassinate him in 1992 for being a little too free with his speech—Curtis, after taking a bullet in the gut, survived serious surgery and was soon broadcasting from his hospital bed.

Most famous and most representative of talk radio in America is, of course, Rush Limbaugh. In England, Limbaugh's politics would be considered perfectly normal and decent by all Englishmen except for a few parlor socialists living idle lives in Hampstead. I was gratified, therefore, to learn that the mere mention of his name in New York is enough to set the teeth of acquaintances my age and older into a puritan grimace. "Rush Limbaugh!" a grunge musician growled at me in an East Village bar, "I hate him! He's disgusting!" (Ten minutes later he was on-stage, spitting beer at the audience and screaming four-letter imprecations through a vast amplifier.) Older acquaintances (some old enough to know better) compare Mr. Limbaugh's program to Father Coughlin's broadcasts in the 30's. They obviously never heard the good Father's radio show, either first- or secondhand—Rush is a pussycat compared to Father Coughlin.

Of all the talk radio hosts I have listened to so far, my favorite has to be G. Gordon Liddy. Unfortunately, the kind of McGoverniks who used to invite the Panthers over for tea and to talk about "offing the pigs" now take umbrage at some of Mr. Liddy's sardonic comments about intrusive BATF officers, comments taken, of course, entirely out of context. Mr. Liddy's assurances that he will not divulge how many persons he has had to eliminate on his country's behalf are thrilling to the ears of any red-blooded young man. Teenage boys who call in for advice are told to study the classics and look to their weapons. Female listeners send him photographs of themselves. The callers are the most articulate and intelligent on talk radio, and many actually know what they are talking about.

What is noticeable about these American shows is that there are so many of them, and that the majority of callers express practical common-sense views utterly unlike the media caricature of Middle America. In America, the left-inspired media indict popular talk shows for their "intolerance," but the callers appear to me to be tolerant almost to the point of being pusillanimous. In England, America is often portrayed as the broken sewer of political correctness pouring across the Atlantic, the government taken over by the loony left, yet the real democracy taking place on talk radio proves that much of the American populace remains untouched by 30 years of radicalism.

Mark Racho is a freelance writer living in Manhattan.

LIBERAL ARTS

POSTAL POLITICS

"The United States Postal Service is very alert—sensitive is no doubt the proper word today—to the possibility that it might offend someone in our militantly multicultural, pluralistic society. Last year it agonized over printing a Christmas stamp at all, and according to a report in *U.S.A. Today*, will renounce this vicious habit entirely in 1995. . . . Somehow it managed to get up the courage to print a Madonna and Child stamp this past year, a painting by Elisabeth Sirani from the year 1663, perhaps offering as justification the little line under the artist's name, 'National Museum of Women in the Arts,' suggesting that if the stamp is culturally insensitive, at least it is gender-sensitive."

—Harold O.J. Brown, from the March 1995 issue of The Religion & Society Report, *a publication of The Rockford Institute.*

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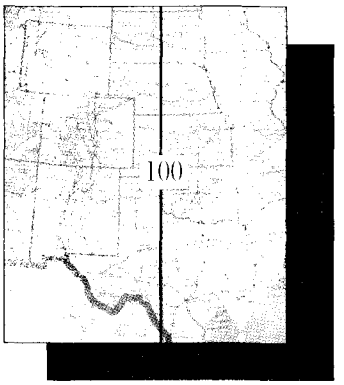
The Hundredth Meridian

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

Navajoland: II



We had gone barely 25 yards when I had a feeling of the woods dissolving around us, and then we were hanging our toes over a bare rock ledge at which the world dropped away. From 20 miles out Black Mesa appeared to float in space like a long dark cloud bisected by a pillar of dust rising half a mile into the desert sky. George watched me for some time before he spoke. "Well?" "Magnificent," I told him.

We descended to a narrow ledge for a closer look at the arch hundreds of feet below through which swallows passed almost quicker than the eye could follow; somewhere the wind-down call of a canyon wren sounded. Then we began to work along the cliff face after Shane, who had disappeared. We found him ten minutes later seated on an outcrop of sandstone rock hugging his bare knees with his wrists and wearing his cap pulled over his eyes. When we sat beside him he pushed back the cap and gave me a challenging look. "What do you think of this country?" Shane demanded. "Beautiful," I said. "I think it's boring," he replied, and commenced staring into the empyrean. George unwrapped a granola bar he had taken from the pack, broke it in two pieces, and offered me one. "What are you looking at?" he asked the boy. "My sheep," Shane answered, without moving his eyes. "Where are they? I don't see any sheep." Using fieldglasses I scanned the plain below for sheep and finally found them, so far out as to be nearly invisible. "That guy," Shane said darkly, "don't know nothing. Otherwise he wouldn't have taken sheep where there ain't no graze." "Where do you take them?" "Somewhere where there's something for them to graze." George pointed out for me his mother-in-law's ranch, directly ahead of us and 1,500 feet below. It was a small house and barn with a couple of big cottonwoods for shade. "Lena says you've had a lot of snakes out here this summer." Shane nodded, and indicated something apparently far in the distance. "It's the witchcrafters' doing," he said. When George made no response to this I asked, "What witchcrafters?" "Those out there." I followed his extended index finger and made out a ranch adjacent to his grandmother's property. "They make the snakes come to us." In the past week he had killed three or four he had found in the house after finishing his afternoon nap, all of them good sized rattlers. When I mentioned that I am fond of snakes, even rattlers, Shane told me sternly that Navajos are not allowed to pick up, eat, or even look at a snake when it is possible to ignore one. We stood finally and began to traverse the rimrock again, gazing down as we went into the side canyons where hawks soared on the thermals above the interlacing trails the deer had made on their way to water. The deepest of the canyons cut through the cliff into the yellow plain below where it formed a crevasse that Shane said was the home of a giant crab who had lived there for many years. All you saw was the huge claw reaching out of the ravine to grab a sheep, or a man. Shane wanted to climb down and investigate the crevasse but George put him off, saying that the country was too flat and uninteresting, as well as too hot, down there. "I know something else you'd enjoy seeing," he told me suddenly. "That is, assuming we can find it. I've never seen it, myself."

We descended White Mesa on its gentler western edge following the curving road down to Kaibito, past men on horseback moving in and out among the juniper trees, women pushing sheep (now as for the past 400 years woman's work in the land of the Navajos) on foot, and windmills revolving like silver pinwheels above the waterwells where rights-holders loaded the big water cans into pickup trucks. As we drove Shane talked about his horses, and how until the livestock reduction program was implemented to reduce overgrazing on the reservation the family had owned 400 sheep, and how he wanted to live in Phoenix after he finished his summertime work, which was branding cattle around the reservation. North of the mesa we came to a general store with a gas pump outside it where two roads intersected. George got out and asked directions from an old Indian standing beside a flatbed truck loaded with hay. The Hosteen, or elder, repeated the word "roo-un" several times slowly around the stalk he had been chewing but finally shook his head, so George called Shane from the pickup to interpret. At sight of the boy the old man's face assumed a warmer expression, the skin around his eyes wrinkling further in a slow smile as he listened to him speak. Then he answered briefly in Navajo. "He doesn't know," Shane translated proudly. "He knows, all right," George said as he started the engine, "but he doesn't want to corrupt an innocent boy like the Dude here." When Lena was pregnant with Christopher she had asked her husband to suspend his archaeological explorations until after the baby was born. "I don't know why anybody would want to live out here," Shane observed. "It's totally boring." Inside the store two Indian boys about 17 years old were flirting with the pretty girl who managed the video desk. They had some English and George asked them if they would be willing to guide us to the turnoff to Inscription House Ruin, and direct us verbally from there. We followed the boys in their red sports car on the newly paved road that terminates at the Indian boarding school at Navajo Mountain, past the new medical center built in total isolation in a juniper and cedar forest. Shane was impressed by the car and wondered aloud how the boys had obtained such a splendid machine. Nobody he said in *his* family would ever buy *him* a car: his grandfather let him have the truck keys sometimes but only when he was drunk. Two or three miles north of the store the boys turned onto a paved apron from which a rutted dirt road moved off among low tree-covered hills. We pulled

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in behind them and the boys came back and began giving us directions to the ruin, but their English was so bad that George asked them to jump in the bed of the truck. They climbed up and hung on tight over the rough canted road, and at last the one on the left side yelled "Stop!" through the driver's window. From here, they made us understand, we would have to walk. They were vague about the direction, and finally George told them to get up in the truck again and drove them out to the highway, where he made an impression by giving them six dollars. "They're going back to the store to buy their little honey a pop," George said as we watched the car disappear into a curve. "There's no mutton-gut on *that* Indian, that's for damn sure. Eh, Dude?"

At the trailhead George locked the truck. We slipped water bottles into the day packs and walked to the edge of the reticulated maze of slickrock canyon. The view was a panoramic 180 degrees from White Mesa low on the southwest horizon to the Vermilion Cliffs in the northwest: a maze of deeply carved purple, red, and orange rock that appeared from the surface plateau as a vast, slightly rolling forest of juniper and piñon pine stretching like a blue mat to the edge of the world where the late afternoon sun, an incandescent ball, rested. George looked at his watch. "Let's go for it," he said, and nodded at Shane. "We can count on our genu-wine Indian guide to get us back to the truck before dark." The genu-wine Indian guide went leaping ahead of us over the rocks like a mountain goat. For an instant he stood poised in silhouette on the hump of a petrified sand dune, before he was gone. George called out to him but did not receive an answer. No discernible trail was in sight and we walked about for a while among the hummocks of red dust grown thinly with grass, prickly pear, and Mormon tea, searching for a way down. From the farther reaches of the park an owl called and was answered by another. The opposite wall of the canyon was a sequence of hanging gardens set in tiers: terraces of piñon, juniper, and wildflowers. "I'll have a bad time explaining at home if I lose Shane," George said. "He isn't lost," I told him; "he's an Indian." "Well, if we can't get off this cliff I guess he can't either." We walked on and discovered a row of cairns that marked a trail descending to the floor of a secondary canyon, but saw no ruins there. Cutting across a peninsula of rock we came to a collapsing hogan built of pine logs, and beyond it a clearly defined footpath. We followed the path and were hailed after a hundred yards by the voice of Shane, who sat on an elevation of rock with his legs stretched out, pressing his hands between his knees. At risk of losing his clients, the genu-wine Indian guide had picked up the trail before he was five minutes from the truck.

The trail down was blocked by a balky whiteface cow who stood chewing the cud before turning reluctantly and trotting on ahead of us, her bag swinging. A hogan with its brush corral stood in tall grass at the head of the canyon beneath ancient cottonwoods that boiled slowly on a breeze easing between the livid rock walls against which the foliage showed an amazing green. Navajo Creek in this season of the year was several inches of brackish water idling between loose banks 15 and 20 feet tall on its way to rendezvous with the Colorado River at Glen Canyon, 60 or 70 miles distant by line of sight. The trail followed through high sagebrush above the creek, allowing us a forced march across the sand beneath cottonwood groves piling like emerald thunderheads into the stark blue sky that made a perfectly fitted roof over Navajo Canyon. Side canyons ran in from left and right; we found horses, a mule, and a donkey in the mouth of one of these, but no ruins. Shane left on a tangent to investigate the condition of these lonely specimens of "those that men live by," and caught up with us to report that they looked well fed and in good health. Evening was near; we had just agreed to turn back at the next canyon when George and I saw it simultaneously: a line of fitted wall a hundred or more feet above the canyon floor, unmistakably the work of human hands though isolated in a wilderness of desert rock. We moved forward again at an increased pace in the lengthening shades of the great cottonwoods. The trail led steeply down into the creek and up the far bank to the base of a tall red cliff, where it clung precariously for another hundred yards before deadheading at a holed chickenwire fence with a sign hung on it that said "Keep Out." We squeezed through the largest hole, climbed up 30 or 40 feet hand over hand, and stood panting on the floor of one of those spectral villages with which the Spanish explorers had almost no contact and that were hardly known by white men until the Macom Expedition of 1859 and those of John Wesley Powell in 1869 and 1871 reported seeing strange rock structures built by human beings in humanly inaccessible places. Probably the majority of these with their troves of relics are undiscovered to this day. The painted pictographs and the petroglyphs tapped or scraped into the desert varnish on remote canyon walls are undomesticated ghosts: to you and only you, perhaps, they make their first—and possibly last—apparition.

Carbon from ancient smokes blackened the ceiling of the cave in patches where the rock surface had not flaked with time, and on the walls above the low simple buildings white prints left by shy hands gave mute greeting across the centuries. To the left of the sequence of footholds cut into the rock and just within the overhang, Shane discovered two potholes that George guessed might have served as the water source for the pueblo. We crossed the circle of flat rock, in which postholes had been carefully cut, that was the floor of the kiva and walked the narrow space between the housefronts and the rocky lip above a potsherd accumulation of anciently-flung houseware. The houses themselves were built of adobe brick reinforced by sticks of brush and roofed with thicker sticks supported by poles. I picked up one of the loose bricks to examine it. Although that brick had been baked around the time that Dante was writing *The Divine Comedy*, the grass used in its construction looked no older than last year's straw. Around the houses and inside them tiny corncobs lay scattered, harvested seven or eight centuries before by the Basketmakers, as the Anasazi are also called: sophisticated agriculturalists for their day, as well as accomplished masons and designers. "Let's go now," Shane suggested. "I don't want to be haunted."

We reached the truck at dark and sat on the tailgate to drink the last of the water and watch Venus arise in the pale ecliptic of the vanished sun. "Are you going out with the sheep in the morning?" George asked. "Not if I can help it," Shane said. "I suppose you're going to need a ceremony to purify you of where you've been today." "I don't need no ceremony." Shane's voice in the darkness was scornful. "Why don't you?" "Because I'm modern," Shane answered serenely.

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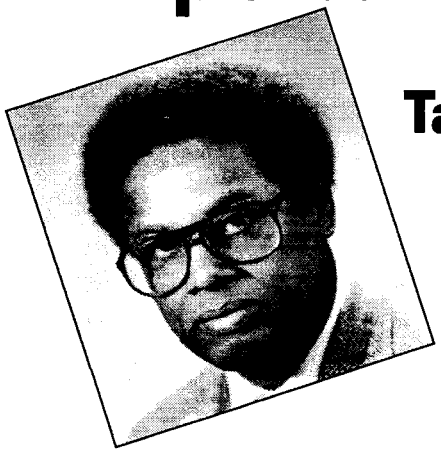

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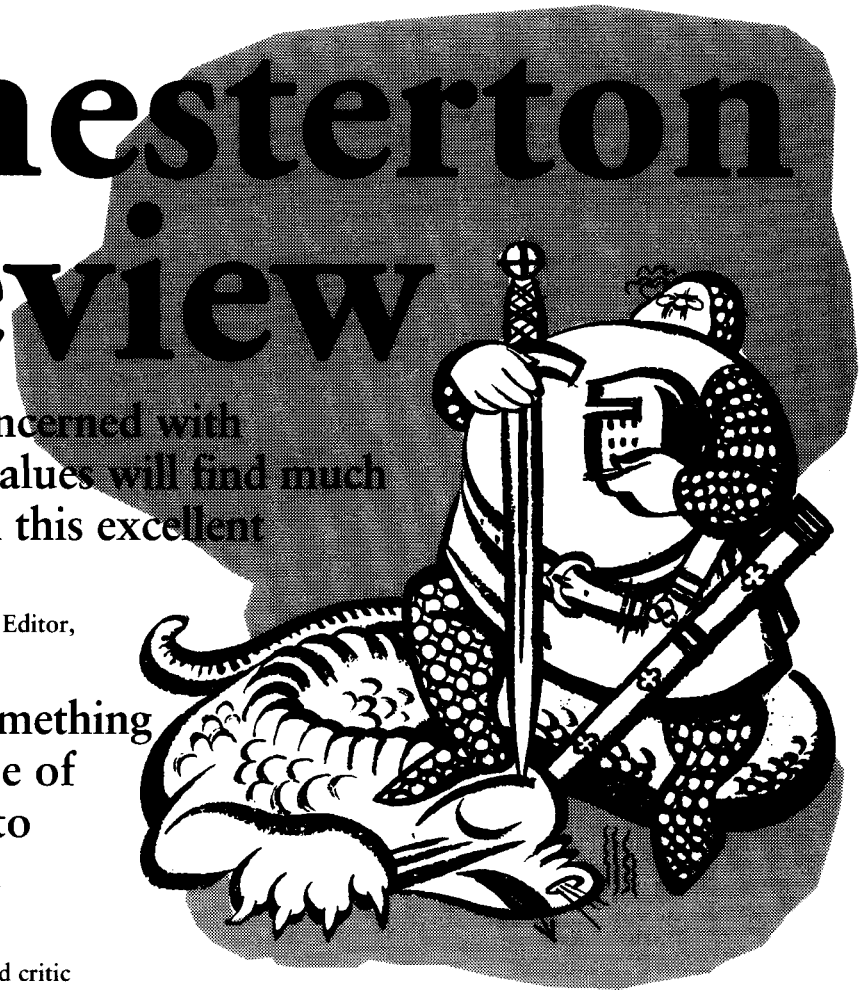

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